DIVINE GRACE

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A SERIES OF INSTRUCTIONS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE BALTIMORE CATECHISM

AN AID TO TEACHERS AND PREACHERS

EDITED BY

REV. EDMUND J. WIRTH, PH.D., D.D.

Professor at St. Bernard's Seminary
Rochester, N. Y.

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NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

6013

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Imprimatur.

✠ JNO. M. FARLEY,
Archbishop of New York.

NEW YORK, June 3, 1903.

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PREFACE

Divine grace is the foundation of the supernatural life, the source of all supernatural virtues, the outpouring of the love of God upon His creatures; it constitutes man a son of God, and gives him a right to the kingdom of heaven. Of grace we may say what Solomon said of divine wisdom, "All good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands."[1] We can never understand fully the dignity and excellence of divine grace. Grace is the sum and substance of the "Good News" announced by God to men. Grace is the fruit of the Redemption; for this did the Son of God become man, for this did He suffer and die that we have grace, and through it Redemption and salvation. Every Christian, the simple and the learned, the young and

[1] Wisd. 7. 11.

the old, all should know this great "mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and copartners of His promise in Christ Jesus."[1] This knowledge becomes still more necessary in the circumstances in which we live. Protestantism has veered from an exaggeration of grace to a complete denial of it; the world in which we live is materialistic and Pelagian. The ideal proposed to the young outside of the Catholic Church is only too often the man who is successful in business, the so-called self-made man. The world is getting further and further away from the supernatural; only what appeals to the senses is considered real; the words "miracle" and "mystery" are for many synonymous with "myth" and "fable." The influence of these surroundings cannot but produce a certain amount of unconscious

[1] Eph. 3. 4–6.

Pelagianism, even in our own people; hence the necessity of insisting, especially nowadays, upon the dignity, gratuitousness, and necessity of divine grace.

The doctrine of grace is difficult; grace is not a thing that falls under the observation of the senses; it is supernatural. For this reason many have thought that it cannot be explained with any degree of fulness to children; *yet the greatness of the gift of God should not be made a reason for passing it over in silence.* If the natural powers of the child do not extend so far as to grasp the sublimity of the truths of God, we must remember that in trying to learn these truths that same grace of God will be there to assist them by its supernatural light. "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones."[1] With the aid of His light, which He denies to the proud and gives to the humble, they

[1] Matt. 11. 25.

will understand something of the mercy of God and of His goodness, communicated to man through divine grace.

These instructions on divine grace are intended as a help to the teacher and the catechist in explaining the doctrine of the Church on this most important subject. My aim has been to give in simple language as full an exposition of the doctrine of grace as possible under the circumstances. All questions not of faith and subject to discussion within the schools have been avoided. These instructions furnish explanations, proofs, and illustrations of the doctrine of the Church to the teacher, who can select from them according to the needs and capacity of the pupils. Pupils of academies, high schools, and the highest grade of grammar schools will, no doubt, be able to grasp nearly all contained in these pages; for smaller children the less important points may be passed over. The instructions are arranged according to the questions of the Baltimore Catechism, which is now in nearly

general use in our Catholic schools. A few instructions have been introduced to which no question corresponds in the catechism. The reason for this is apparent; the logical connection of the doctrine required it; these questions are, moreover, of prime importance, *e.g.* the doctrine that God wills all men to be saved, and hence gives to every man sufficient grace; the doctrine of the necessity of good works. The insertion of these instructions has compelled me to unite in several cases two questions in one, since I wished to retain the number twelve, the number of questions in the Baltimore Catechism, as also not to swell the book beyond proportions. This has been done in the case of such questions as would permit a briefer treatment, or which were again touched upon in other parts of the catechism.

The instructions are based on a small German treatise, Nepefny, *Das Uebernatuerliche Leben*, of which this is an adaptation. The work of adapting it to the Baltimore Catechism has, however, necessitated in several

cases the writing of entirely new instructions, in others the contracting of several into one, together with many other additions and omissions, so that this book has lost much of its resemblance to the original.

EDMUND J. WIRTH.

ROCHESTER, N.Y.
FEAST OF PENTECOST, 1903.

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DIVINE GRACE

I

INTRODUCTION

Which are the chief effects of the Redemption?

The chief effects of the Redemption are two: the satisfaction of God's justice by Christ's suffering and death, and the gaining of grace for men.

ALL things have a purpose for which they exist. The tools which we use, the things that grow in the field, all have their usefulness. The plants and animals exist to furnish food and clothing for man. We have eyes to see, ears to hear, feet to walk, hands to work. All things have their purpose — is man alone to be an exception to this rule? No, certainly not; man, too, exists for a purpose. What this purpose is our catechism tells us on the very first page: *God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this*

world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next. This is the purpose for which we were created. There are many people who have given up all belief in Christianity and lead bad lives. They say that with death all is over, that there is no heaven or hell, that there is no God. They say that man is nothing but a more highly developed animal, that there is no essential difference between man and the brute animals. Of course they do not believe this themselves; they talk in this manner that they may the more easily give free rein to their evil passions, and thus live like animals. How could any one in his heart believe such an absurdity! How much man differs from an animal! He has understanding by which he can know truth — yes, reach to a knowledge of God Himself. This lifts him far above the brute, who knows nothing but to seek its food and bodily pleasure. Man has free will, and can direct his own actions. He is the lord of creation; all other things are but to serve him. Even one look at his body shows us

the great difference there is between him and animals; whilst the animal has its head turned toward the earth, man only touches it with the sole of his foot, as if to indicate that he is not made for the earth, but that his destiny is higher. Man is not for the earth, but the earth is for man. He is made to the image and likeness of God, and his destiny is far higher than that of the animals. Man is made for heaven.

That our destiny or last end is not in this world we know also from the *intense desire of happiness* which we experience in our hearts and which the things of this world cannot satisfy. As St. Augustine says, "Our heart is unquiet until it rests in God."[1] If man were made for this world, the things of this world would satisfy him; but this is not the case. "The eye is not filled with seeing, neither is the ear filled with hearing."[2] The things of this world may seem to satisfy us for a time, but soon we tire of them and seek new pleasures. If worldly possessions and the pleasures of

[1] Conf. 1. 1. [2] Eccles. 1. 8.

earth could make us happy, then at least Solomon should have been happy; for he possessed accomplishments of mind and body, wealth and wisdom, he tasted all pleasure. And yet at the end of his life he exclaimed with bitterness of soul, "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity"[1]; *i.e.* all the goods of this world are nothing but empty shadows, devoid of any real value.

We will, therefore, not listen to the foolish talk of those who debase the dignity of man and try to reduce him to the level of the beast, in order to abuse him for their shameful and sinful schemes. We will maintain our dignity, and as men and Christians remain faithful to the teaching of our catechism, which tells us that we are created for the happiness of heaven. We will not be deceived by men without faith; we will not be robbed of our Christian inheritance; we will not be as foolish as was Esau, who sold his inheritance for a mess of pottage.

Heaven is the end of our pilgrimage here

[1] Eccles. 1. 2.

upon earth. What a sublime destiny! We are to be eternally happy! We are made for heaven, the place of perfect happiness with God! The happiness of heaven exceeds all that we can imagine or think. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."[1] "We see now through a glass, in an obscure manner; but then face to face."[2] What joy and happiness to see God face to face, to see Him as He is in all His beauty! What joy and happiness to be always with God and His Blessed Mother in the company of all the angels and saints of God!

This is the happiness for which God created man; this is the happiness which man was surely to attain; but by the *sin of Adam* an obstacle was put in the way. God created man, and to try his fidelity He gave him a command not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in the garden of

[1] 1 Cor. 2. 9. [2] 1 Cor. 12. 13.

Paradise. If he remained faithful, he was to be preserved from death, and after a time to be taken to heaven, there to be happy forever with God. We know from our Bible History what happened: the devil in the shape of a serpent tempted Eve, promising her that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, they should become like God, knowing good and evil. Eve allowed herself to be deceived and took of the fruit and ate and also gave it to Adam, and he, too, ate of it. By this act of disobedience to the law of God our first parents lost all the supernatural gifts bestowed on them by God, and they were driven from Paradise. They lost the gift of immortality, and were made subject to death; they lost heaven, which was promised them on condition that they remain obedient. The punishment was death of the body and death of the soul. They had offended God by transgressing a commandment which God had made for them. God had intended that the state of friendship with Him in which

they were created, and the happiness of heaven which was to follow, were to be handed down by them to their descendants. When they lost these gifts which God had bestowed on them, they lost them not only for themselves but also for their descendants. They could not hand down that which they had lost. Through the sin of Adam and Eve we are born, not friends of God, as we should have been had they not sinned, but we are born His enemies; we are born in sin. This sin is called original sin. The condition of man is, therefore, much worse after the fall than it was before the fall. We have not the gift of immortality, we are not born in the friendship of God; and with the loss of the right to the inheritance of heaven our understanding is darkened, and there is left in us a strong inclination to evil.

Sin is an offence against God. Justice demands that some *reparation* should be made for this offence. When we consider the greatness of the offence, we see that man

could not repair the injury done. The offence was against God; He who is infinite in all perfections was insulted by one whom He had made out of nothing. Just as it is a greater fault to insult one who is far above us than it is to insult one who is our equal or even below us, so it was an immeasurably great crime to insult God, who is infinitely above man; likewise it is a greater fault to insult one who has shown us nothing but kindness than it is to insult a stranger to whom we owe no gratitude; God had been not merely a friend and benefactor, but He had given to man all that man was and possessed. We see from the greatness of the guilt of sin that man was unable to make reparation for the offence committed against God. God took pity on the work of His hand, and sent His only Son to redeem us, and thus reinstate us in His friendship. It was His love that prompted Him to do this, for He "so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son"[1] to re-

[1] John 3. 16.

deem it. The Son of God, being true God as the Father is God, could make ample satisfaction for the sins of the world. This He did by His Passion and death. Hence our catechism gives, as the first effect of the Redemption, the satisfaction of God's justice by Christ's Passion and death.

The second person of the Blessed Trinity became man, suffered and died, not only to satisfy God's justice, but also to gain grace for man. *Christ died, not only to make reparation for the insult offered to God by sin, but also to raise man again to the state of friendship with God*, to reopen heaven to him. Through sin heaven, for which man had been created, was closed to him; Christ came to obtain for man that which was necessary that he might again be made worthy of that inexpressible happiness which comes from the possession of God Himself for all eternity. Through the merits of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ we are again called to the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

What must we do in order that we may reach heaven? is the all-important question for us. God wills us to reach heaven because He is our Father; He has made heaven for us and wants us, His children, to be with Him for all eternity. When we had lost our right to heaven through sin, God's only begotten Son became man to regain it for us. If God wills us to obtain the possession of heaven, we can obtain it. Still, heaven is not to be given us without our doing something to earn it. Heaven is to be a reward. St. Paul compares heaven to a crown that is given to the victor in a race.[1] Our Lord says, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."[2]

There is then something to be done on our part that we may receive the reward of eternal happiness. What is this? *To be saved we must believe in God, and keep His commandments.* First we must *believe in Him;* we must believe all that He has

[1] 1 Cor. 9. 24. [2] Matt. 11. 12.

made known and proposes for our belief through the holy Catholic Church. This is the first requisite. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."[1] "He that believeth not shall be condemned."[2] One who refuses to believe the truths which God Himself has revealed insults God. Such a one will not go to heaven, but will be punished forever in hell. We will therefore always believe all that God has revealed and teaches us through His holy Church, for God is all truth and cannot deceive us; He is all-knowing and cannot err. We will therefore always be good, faithful Christians, clinging to the faith of the holy Catholic Church. In this faith we will live, and in this faith we hope to die.

The second condition which we must fulfil in order to be saved is to *keep the commandments of God.* "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."[3] If we wish to go to heaven, it is not enough to believe; we must also keep the command-

[1] Heb. 11. 6. [2] Mark 16. 16. [3] Matt. 19. 17.

ments which God has made for us. We cannot reasonably expect that God will make us eternally happy, merely because we believe what He says, if we refuse to do what He commands us. To be saved we must do His holy will, we must be obedient to Him, we must keep His commandments. Our catechism teaches us this in the question: "Is it enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved? It is not enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved, but we must also keep the commandments of God and of the Church." We belong to the Church through faith; this is not enough, we must also obey God by keeping the commandments which He has given us, and those which the Church makes by His authority. We will therefore be good Catholics, believing all that God teaches through the Church, and obeying cheerfully His holy will, as we know it through His commandments.

Can we believe and keep the commandments of God? This most important ques-

tion may be answered in two ways. We may answer, Yes; with the help of God, we can believe and keep His commandments; or, we may answer, No; of our own strength we can do nothing to deserve the kingdom of heaven. Both answers, though at first sight opposite, are true. With God's help we can do all things. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."[1] Without that help of God we can do nothing. "Without Me," says our Lord, "you can do nothing."[2] All therefore depends on the help of God; if we have Him with us, all things become easy to us. This help of God, which is so necessary to believe and to keep the commandments of God, and hence to be saved, we call *Divine Grace*. If we rely on our own strength, we shall not be able to comply with the conditions which our Lord has laid down for salvation; if, however, we rely upon the help of God, that is, upon His grace, then we shall be able to believe and obey in a manner worthy of eternal life.

[1] Philip. 4. 13. [2] John 15. 5.

You may often have experienced this yourselves. Perhaps you had some evil habit, — lying, disobedience, or cursing — and at confession you were really sorry for your fault; you promised God faithfully to amend and to do better for the future, but after a few days you fell back into your old sin, and were perhaps even worse than before confession. What was the reason of this? You were sincere when you promised to avoid this sin, but you depended on your own strength, and neglected to pray for the help of God. The consequence was that your strength failed you, and you fell back into your old ways. Had you prayed, instead of depending on yourself, and said: O my God, I recognize my fault, and wish to avoid sin for the future; but of myself I am weak and miserable. Give me the help of your holy grace, strengthen my will, help me, save me. Had you prayed in this manner, instead of trusting in yourself, you would have overcome your fault, or, at least, you would have improved remarkably and

not fallen so frequently. God often permits one who trusts in himself to fall into sin that he may learn his own weakness and so acquire humility. "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble."[1] God assists them that trust in Him, and confounds them that are self-sufficient and act as though they did not need His grace to avoid sin. Hence the Psalmist sings, "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me."[2]

Grace is therefore necessary to believe and to keep the commandments. To obtain this grace for us Jesus suffered and died. His Passion and death satisfied the justice of God for the sins committed against Him, and hence St. John the Baptist calls Him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.[3] His Passion and death merited for us grace so that we might again be able to enter the happiness of heaven. "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to

[1] James 4. 6. [2] Psalm 69. 1. [3] John 1. 29.

men whereby we must be saved."[1] He, Himself, tells us that no man can come to the Father except through Him. Without the grace of God we cannot be saved; this grace which is so necessary for our salvation comes to us from Jesus, who merited it by His Passion and death. Jesus is called on this account the second Adam. Just as we have all fallen in the first Adam, and are descended from him as sinners, so we must be freed from sin and descend from the second Adam as saints. We will, therefore, earnestly pray for the help of God's grace; we will not trust in our own strength, but rather put our trust in God.

We answered the question whether we could believe and keep the commandments by saying that, although of ourselves we are unable to do anything, we could believe and keep the commandments of God with His help. This answer shows us that grace is necessary, but it also shows us that *grace alone will not make us believe and keep the*

[1] Acts 4. 12.

commandments, since we say that with the help of His grace *we can* believe and keep the commandments. We, too, must do something; God helps us, true, yet He does not want us to stand by idle; but rather to work with His grace in believing and doing what is good. St. Paul says, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." God's help will not be wanting if only we have the good will to use His grace and perform good works. God has given us free will because He desires a free service; He wishes us to serve Him out of love — not because we are compelled to serve Him, and cannot avoid doing so. In this way the sun, moon, and stars, the animals and plants, serve Him. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands."[1] Man, however, is to serve God as a rational creature; he is to serve Him by submitting his intellect to faith and his will to obedience.

We have seen that we are created for

[1] Psalm 18. 1.

heaven, and that after heaven was lost by sin, Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity became man, and by His death atoned, *i.e.* made satisfaction, for sin; that through the Passion and death of Jesus Christ heaven was again opened to man, and grace, necessary to obtain the possession of heaven, was given us. In the tenth lesson of the catechism, which we are about to study, we shall learn what grace is, how many kinds of grace there are, and how necessary it is for salvation. We will endeavor to be very attentive, so that we may understand rightly the teaching of the Church on this most important subject. "O merciful Lord, incline Thine ears to our prayers, and enlighten our hearts by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit; that we may worthily receive Thy holy mysteries, and love Thee with an everlasting love."

II

NATURE AND DIVISION OF GRACE

NATURE OF GRACE

What do you mean by grace?

By grace I mean a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation.

If we meet a great man who is above us in social position, one to whom we look up and whom we honor, and he receives us kindly, speaks to us, gives us some valuable present, we say of him that he is very kind and *gracious*. Grace can signify kindness, but it may also be taken to signify a present or gift by which we recognize the kindness of the giver. In this second sense it is used in our catechism. Grace is, therefore, a present or a *gift* which we receive from One who is higher than we are. A gift is something that we receive without having earned or deserved it. If we work for a man for a

certain sum of money, and he gives us this money at the end of the time we worked for him, we do not receive a gift — we receive our wages. Because a man pays us our wages we do not need to consider him as especially kind and gracious. If, however, some one gives us something which we have not worked for and which consequently we did not earn, then we receive a gift. Grace is not wages, but a gift.

Grace is a *supernatural* gift. A gift such as we described above is a merely natural gift. The catechism says that grace is a supernatural one. What does this mean? Let us illustrate by a few examples. Some one is sick, and God gives him back his health; or a boy has received special talents, quickness of understanding, a good memory, so that he learns quickly and retains easily what he has learned; or we might take the example of Solomon who received extraordinary wisdom. All these things are gifts of God, but they are not supernatural gifts. They confer only what one might have by

nature, or they strengthen the natural powers of the soul or body. Health is something natural, so is understanding and memory, so also is wisdom. Grace is something higher than these things; it has to do with our eternal salvation. It is a gift which is to help us reach heaven and be eternally happy; it is a gift which is to help us reach the end for which we were created; it is a gift which does not belong to this world but to the next; it is a gift which brings us to God. When Solomon received from God great wisdom he obtained a natural gift, because he might have been the wisest of men and yet not obey the commandments of God and so lose heaven. When, however, a boy recites a prayer before confession, and asks God to give him true sorrow for his sins and the help to avoid them for the future, then he prays for a supernatural gift. Likewise we pray for a supernatural gift when we say, "Jesus, have mercy on us," because then we ask for the mercy which is necessary for the forgiveness of our sins. When Solomon

received wisdom, it was the wisdom to rule his people well. This was only a natural gift, intended for his own temporal welfare and that of the Jewish people. On the contrary, when we read in the Sacred Scriptures the words of Solomon, "And as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this was also a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was; I went to the Lord, and besought Him, and said, with my whole heart, etc,"[1] we see that here he asked for a supernatural gift, since continence consists in overcoming nature. It was also a supernatural grace to know that it was a gift of God, and that we must pray for it. The gift of God which we call grace is not a natural but a supernatural one, that is, it is a gift which helps us to obtain eternal salvation.

The supernatural gift of grace is given us *through the merits of Jesus Christ.* In the beginning God created man for eternal happiness in heaven, and gave him all the grace

[1] Wisd. 8. 21.

necessary to reach this end. Man, however, did not remain faithful but sinned, and so lost the supernatural gift he had received. By this sin Adam brought misery on himself and on his descendants. No one could have obtained grace for himself or for others, had not a Redeemer been promised and sent by God. This Redeemer was the only-begotten Son of God the Father. All grace given to man before His coming was given because God had promised to send Him, and foreknew that by His suffering and death He would obtain for mankind a superabundance of grace. The Son of God became man, and shed His blood for the redemption of the world; His blood "that speaketh better than Abel"[1] washed out the sins of the world and merited grace for men. Abel's blood cried to heaven for vengeance, but the blood of Jesus cries to heaven for forgiveness and grace. Grace is bestowed on man on account of the merits of Jesus Christ; but it does not cease to be grace because God is

[1] Heb. 12. 24.

moved to grant it to us through the merits of His Divine Son. It still remains undeserved on our part, as well as a gift of mercy on the part of God, because even His Son was a gift of His mercy. Love does not destroy God's freedom in giving us His grace, for God is all-free and "God is love."[1]

The supernatural gift of grace, bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ, is given us *for our salvation.* God made us for heaven; He wishes us to be forever happy with Him. This is the reason why He gives us His holy grace. By grace He acts continually on our souls, giving us the light of His truth, that we may believe firmly all that He has revealed, moving our will, that we may avoid sin and do good. If we are faithful to Him, He will lead us through life and crown us with the crown of glory. This is the purpose of grace and its perfection. Heaven seems far off; how can we reach it? Of our own strength we can never obtain it, but by God's grace its

[1] 1 John 4. 16.

possession will be easy. "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him."[1] Let us rejoice to know that God has not only made us for heaven, but also gives us the means of reaching it. He, as it were, says to us: I have prepared unspeakable joys for you in heaven; take courage. I Myself will help to obtain them if only you do not resist Me. I will give you the necessary strength by My grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee."[2]

Grace is given us to obtain eternal life; it is therefore *most valuable.* Grace, says St. Thomas,[3] is more valuable than the whole world with all that it contains. St. Augustine affirms that even heaven and all the choirs of angels cannot be compared with grace. Man ought to be more thankful to God for the smallest gift of divine grace than if he had received the perfection of the highest angels and had been made king of heaven and earth. The angels, too, enjoy the

[1] John 6. 44. [2] 2 Cor. 12. 9.
[3] Sum. Theol. I–II, qu. 113, a. 9 ad 2.

grace of God, and hence St. Augustine is speaking only of the natural perfections of the angels. Grace is a ray of the beauty of God that falls on our souls to make them also beautiful. Since grace makes us worthy of the love and possession of God Himself, it cannot be understood by us entirely; its value cannot be measured by anything created; it can only be compared to God. The angels in heaven cannot appreciate fully the value of grace; they stand and adore the mercy of God, who communicates Himself to His creatures. I fear, however, that they also stand and wonder at the incomprehensible folly of man, who so lightly casts aside that precious gift for a piece of dirt in the shape of money or some vile pleasure of the senses. The angels must weep at seeing us, who are called to the highest honor and the greatest happiness in heaven, rushing headlong into misery and sin, exposing ourselves to the danger of being cast forever into hell with the devil and his followers. Indeed, the prophet spoke the truth when he

said, "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart."[1] If we considered the value of divine grace, that grace alone can bring us to the end for which we were created, that it alone can bring us the everlasting happiness of heaven, would we care so little for it and cast it aside so readily? Assuredly not.

Grace is compared by St. Augustine to the soul. Matter in itself is dead, and can never of itself become living; it requires a soul to put life and motion into the dead clay: man, too, of himself is dead for heaven, and can no more of his own strength gain heaven than a piece of lifeless clay can of itself stand up and walk. God Himself cannot create a creature for which grace should be a natural perfection, just as He cannot create matter which can think without having a soul. As the soul is the cause of natural life, so grace is the cause of the life of heaven. The earth receives its light from the sun, and if the sun should cease to

[1] Jer. 12. 11.

give light, the earth would be in darkness; so our soul is but like the earth, and grace is the sun that illumines it and gives it all the beauty that it possesses in the eyes of God. Grace makes the poor man richer than the greatest king; a man who has the grace of God has a greater treasure than he who possesses all the wealth of the earth.

We should be very grateful to God for the gift of His holy grace. We thank Him that He has created us out of nothing, and has placed us above all His works. How much greater gratitude do we not owe Him for the still greater gift of grace? We should never for a moment forget the greatness of this gift of God, lest we become like those men in the gospel who were invited to a banquet, but neglected to come for the sake of some little gain or pleasure. Of them our Lord said that they were not worthy of the banquet. We will always keep before our mind the inestimable value of divine grace, that it is more valuable than all the things of this earth

or even all that the angels possess, apart from grace, that it is given us to make us forever happy, that without it we cannot reach the end for which God created us, that its perfection is in the glory of heaven. With this before our mind we will not be so foolish as to imitate the guests invited to the banquet, of whom our Lord said that they were not worthy of it because they did not appreciate the goodness of the host who invited them. We will not forfeit the heavenly banquet for some worldly consideration or some passing pleasure.

DIVISION OF GRACE

How many kinds of grace are there?

There are two kinds of grace, sanctifying grace and actual grace.

By grace, as we have seen, we understand a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation. Grace, strictly speaking, is only one, as God who gives it is one, and as Jesus who merited it is one, but we give it different names according to the purpose for which it is given.

it different names according to the different purposes for which it is given to us. Grace is given us to work out our salvation; every help that God gives us for this purpose is called divine grace. These helps are especially of two kinds; God gives us grace either to be good or to do good. The grace which God gives us to make us good and holy in His eyes is called sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is something that God puts into our souls to remain there, and which makes them holy and pleasing to Him; it is a supernatural beauty. The grace which God gives us to perform good actions, to do good, is called actual grace.

Actual grace is a supernatural help which God gives us to turn away from sin, to pray well, to repent of our sins, to give alms, to perform our duties properly, etc. Actual grace does not remain in the soul as sanctifying grace does; it is given us to help us perform some good act; hence with the performance of the act the grace

also passes away. Let us see this by an example: we are going to Mass on Sunday morning, and some boy meets us and tries to induce us to stay away from Mass in order to make some little excursion out into the woods. Our conscience tells us that we must hear Mass on Sunday, that it is a mortal sin to neglect to go to Mass on Sunday, when we are able to do so. On the other hand, it is a fine morning, and the temptation to stay from Mass and take a walk instead is great. The voice of conscience, warning us not to sin, is from the influence of the grace of God; God put this good thought into our minds that we might resist the temptation and resolve to go to Mass. Once we have, under the influence of divine grace, made the good resolution, and have by the help of this same grace carried it out, the good work is finished and there is no more need of grace for this particular good work. Actual grace was necessary for the performance of the good work, but when the work was

done actual grace also ceased. Actual grace is, therefore, as you understand now, a help of God to perform some good act, whether that good act be to resist temptation, to avoid sin, or whether it be some positively good act, such as to hear Mass, to say our morning and evening prayers, to say grace before and after meals, to make a good confession, to forgive some one who has injured us, etc. Because this grace is given us to help us to do good acts, we call it actual grace.

Sanctifying grace, on the other hand, is given us not to do good, but to make us good and holy in the sight of God. It is a supernatural gift that God puts into our souls, which makes them pleasing to Him. Sanctifying grace remains in the soul. It changes the soul into a temple of the Holy Ghost and makes it beautiful, giving it a new life, the life of the love of God. This grace remains in the soul until it is driven out by mortal sin. Sanctifying grace raises us above our nature; it makes us children of God, and

being children of God we become heirs of heaven. Sanctifying grace makes us partake of the divine nature itself. As long as we have in our souls sanctifying grace, so long are we friends of God and certain of the possession of the kingdom of heaven. As long as this treasure is ours, so long we possess the love of God; and if God is our friend and is with us, whom shall we fear? Sanctifying grace is the greatest gift that God can give us, since it insures us the possession of God Himself. In the Holy Scriptures this grace is compared to a garment; just as a beautiful garment is used to adorn the body and make it pleasing in the eyes of men, so sanctifying grace clothes and adorns the soul, giving it a supernatural beauty and making it pleasing in the eyes of God. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; with the robe of justice He hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown and as a bride adorned with

jewels."[1] As long as we have this grace we shall remain in the love of God; and "He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him. God is charity."[2]

Every grace is a supernatural gift; both actual and sanctifying grace are supernatural; both belong to the order of salvation; both come from God, and are given to us to lead us to God. They differ from each other in this, that actual grace is given us to help us to do good and avoid evil, whereas sanctifying grace is given us that it may remain in the soul and make it pleasing to God. Actual grace is given to all men, saints and sinners, to the heathen and the Christian; God wishes all men to be saved, and gives to all the actual grace necessary to enable them to do what is required for salvation. Sanctifying grace is possessed only by the children of God; only they who are baptized and free from mortal sin have this special gift of God's love. Actual grace disposes the soul for the reception of sanctifying grace, and after sanctify-

[1] Is. 61. 10. [2] 1 John 4. 16.

ing grace has been received in the soul actual grace continually moves man to know and to will what is commanded by God and what is pleasing to Him. Both actual grace and sanctifying grace are necessary for us — sanctifying grace that we become children of God, actual grace that we live as His children, loving Him and serving Him.

III

NATURE OF SANCTIFYING GRACE

What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God.

One of the most beautiful parables which our Lord told for the instruction of His hearers was that of the heavenly marriage-feast. He said: "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage. But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and

having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways gathered together all that they found, both bad and good; and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he said to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."[1] We can interpret this parable in the fol-

[1] Matt. 22. 2 *seqq.*

lowing manner: The king is God, the Father, who makes a marriage-feast for His Son. Through His servants, the priests, He invites all men to this feast, the happiness of heaven; all are to have part in enjoying the glory of the Son of God. This feast takes place in the kingly palace, where everything is most beautiful, and hence the guests are to come clothed in an especial wedding-garment. This garment can be obtained by every one. In fact in the East it was customary that such a garment be sent by the person giving the feast to each of the invited guests. This garment is to make our souls beautiful in the eyes of God; it is the garment of sanctifying grace. Without this garment we cannot take part in the pleasures of the heavenly banquet. He who comes into eternity without it will not be admitted into heaven, but will be cast into exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Such a one must be silent when God asks him, Friend, how did you come hither, not having on a wed-

ding-garment? He cannot excuse himself on the plea of poverty because God sent him such a garment; and if he does not wear it, it is through his own neglect. He knew that such a garment was necessary; it was even sent to him; he has therefore no excuse to offer. Without sanctifying grace we cannot please God; we cannot enjoy the happiness of heaven. For this reason the instruction on sanctifying grace is most important. We should try to learn what is meant when we hear the words, sanctifying grace, state of grace, justification, etc.

When we understand what a precious gift sanctifying grace is, then we will be more anxious to preserve it in our hearts. Our catechism tells us that sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God. What sanctifying grace is in itself is difficult to explain, but we can get some idea of it by considering its origin and its effects upon the soul. As to its *origin*, it is, like actual grace, a free gift of God. The Holy Ghost distributes

the fruits of the Redemption; He is the distributer of grace. Actual grace is also a gift of the Holy Ghost, but sanctifying grace is a gift of the Holy Ghost in an especial manner. The Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier, and by this grace we are made holy, and are sanctified in the eyes of God.

Like all grace, sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift of God. God did not create us for this world, that we should live here and seek our happiness on this earth; for the things of this world can never satisfy the desire of the heart of man. Our end lies beyond this life, that is, we are made for a supernatural end. God has made us for heaven; the vision and possession of God Himself is the purpose for which we are created, and in this our happiness is to consist. To reach this supernatural end our natural powers are not sufficient. We cannot of our own natural strength reach that which is above nature; we need supernatural faculties to do supernatural works worthy of a supernatural reward. These supernatural

faculties are given us by the Holy Ghost in sanctifying grace, which makes us holy before God and entitles us to enter a supernatural community of life with God and the saints.

How does the Holy Ghost give us sanctifying grace? He gives us sanctifying grace by entering our souls and working there our sanctification; as St. Paul says, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[1] By sanctifying grace the Holy Ghost Himself comes into our souls, and thus we enter into a most close union with God. St. Thomas Aquinas calls grace a participation of the divine nature on the part of man, and a communication of the divine nature on the part of God. This is well founded in the Holy Scriptures. Our Lord said, "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him."[2] There is then, according to the teaching of Jesus, a

[1] Rom. 5. 5. [2] John 14. 23.

most intimate union between God and them that love Him; God dwells in them. They are no longer "strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens and domestics of God."[1] The teaching of St. Thomas that grace is a communication of the divine nature is founded on the words of St. Peter, "He hath given us most great and precious promises that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature."[2]

This communication of the divine nature is not to be understood as though God gave man a part of His being, or that man by grace becomes God. The sense is that just as God, the Father, communicates His nature to the Son, who by this becomes like the Father in nature, so in a similar manner He turns to them whom He loves, and makes them more like Himself than they were before by nature. The communication of His nature to the Son is the pattern, the communication of His nature by grace, the imitation. The Son is the same as

[1] Eph. 2. 19. [2] 2 Peter 1. 4.

the Father in nature, man by sanctifying grace becomes an image of God. We are created according to the image and likeness of God; by grace this image becomes more exact and pronounced. Out of love for His only Son, the Father turns to man and makes him like Himself, calling him to eternal happiness. Through grace a new life, which is supernatural, is implanted in him; this gives him higher powers. By reason of these supernatural faculties which come from grace, man can perform acts which are supernatural, which make him worthy of a supernatural reward, and raise him to a communion with God. By the working of the Holy Ghost man is raised above nature.

From what has been said we can form some idea of the *beauty and value of sanctifying grace.* It is a gift of the Holy Ghost and that not an ordinary one, but a supernatural gift — one that is above all the things of nature in beauty and value. It is given us through the infinite love of God, in order

that we might enter into the closest union with Him. It is a most beautiful garment — the wedding-garment which makes us worthy of the heavenly wedding-feast of the Son of God. It is a divine power, dwelling in the soul, a glowing light which makes our souls so beautiful, that if it were given to any one to see a soul adorned with sanctifying grace, he would be tempted to take that soul for God Himself. Grace makes us like God as much as a creature can become like Him. Grace is, therefore, of immeasurable value; the least degree of grace is infinitely more precious than all the goods of this world. If we possessed the whole world, it could not be compared with the smallest degree of grace given to the humblest Christian. Sanctifying grace is worth as much to us as God Himself, for without it we cannot possess God, and with it God is ours. Grace is, as it were, the document that assures us of His possession, and gives us a right to the inheritance of heaven. Even if some one could come into heaven

without possessing grace, which is impossible, he would not be able to see God or enjoy the happiness of the just, because he would lack the supernatural light that enables the saints to see God. Like the man in the parable of the wedding-feast, he would be cast out into exterior darkness; darkness and eternal death is the only state which is fit for one who, through his own fault, has neglected to appear before God clothed in the wedding-garment of sanctifying grace. This we see in what God has revealed to us of the history of the angels.

In the beginning God created the *angels* and gave them sanctifying grace; they were all good and pleasing to God when they were first created; but some of them sinned, and by sin lost the grace God had given them. They were cast out of heaven and hurled into hell forever. Having lost their wedding-garment, they were no longer worthy to enjoy the feast of heaven. If sorrow could find a place in heaven, then we would say that there was the greatest sorrow

among the good angels at the terrible lot of these unfaithful ones; we would imagine that they looked with sadness at the places left vacant by the punishment of their fallen companions. These places were, however, not always to remain vacant; like the king in the parable, God wished His house to be full; and for this reason He decreed to create other beings to take the place of these fallen angels. God decided to make man, and to clothe him from the beginning with sanctifying grace. First He formed a body from the slime of the earth, then He breathed into it an immortal soul, which was endowed with understanding and free will. At the same time He adorned it with the supernatural beauty of sanctifying grace. Man was to be happy forever; he was to live a short time here upon earth, free from trouble, care, and sickness, yes, even death was to be unknown to him; then he was to be taken into eternal happiness, to enjoy for eternity the possession of God, and the companionship of the angels. Because God created

man for a supernatural end, He also gave him the supernatural powers of sanctifying grace, that he might be enabled to know, love, and serve God in a supernatural manner, and so merit that happiness for which he was created.

God wished a free service; He did not wish to force man to remain in the state in which He had created him; man was to decide for himself whether he would remain in the state of grace and serve God or not; he was to prove his worthiness by an act of obedience; and for this reason God gave him free will. God tried man; He gave him a commandment not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in the garden of Paradise, lest he should die. Had our first parents remained faithful to the command of God, they would have remained in the happy state of sanctifying grace, they would, after a short stay upon earth, have been transferred to the joys of heaven without first tasting the bitter cup of death; mankind would have occupied the places left vacant

by the fall of the angels. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve transgressed the command of God, and ate of the forbidden fruit; they lost sanctifying grace and with it their right to eternal happiness. Just as they were to transmit their state of grace and the friendship of God to their descendants, so they transmitted their human nature, deprived of grace and infected with sin and its consequences. No one was able to obtain heaven and be saved; all should have been lost forever, had not God shown mercy to man, and sent him a Redeemer. God, moved by pity, promised man a Redeemer who would atone for the sins of the world. This Redeemer was the only Son of God, who became man and suffered for us. He has atoned for our sins, reconciled us with God, opened again the gates of heaven which sin had closed. By His death He "blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, . . . fastening it to the cross."[1] As His death has been our life,

[1] Col. 2. 14.

"by His bruises we are healed."[1] When Jesus died, He died for the salvation of all men; all are to receive the benefit of His death. That this might be brought about, He instituted a Church in which He left the Sacraments, those channels of grace through which grace flows to men. By the Sacraments the benefits of the Redemption are given to us; they are the means instituted to reconcile us with God. This is done first through Baptism.

What are the effects of sanctifying grace? What happens in the soul when we receive the grace of God? God acts on the powers of the soul by actual grace, but by sanctifying grace He produces a still deeper effect. He acts on the soul itself. He gives the soul a new life and transforms its nature. Before man receives sanctifying grace he is a sinner; he lacks the properties which God looks for in one who is His friend; the image of God is blurred. This soul now receives sanctifying grace; imme-

[1] Is. 53. 5.

diately a great change takes place; sin is destroyed, everything that is displeasing to God is removed; he who a little while before was a sinner is now just, *i.e.* he is as Adam and Eve were before they fell into sin; he is now an object of God's pleasure, a friend of God. *By grace sin is remitted*, and man from a sinner becomes a friend of God.

The remission of sin is not the only effect of sanctifying grace; its effect is much more far-reaching. When God forbade our first parents to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in the Garden of Paradise, He said, "On what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death."[1] The death here spoken of is a twofold death, the death of the body by the separation of the soul from the body, and the death of the soul. They broke the commandment of God, and the punishment followed; the death of the body did not come at once, but the death of the soul was inflicted immediately. This death

[1] Gen. 2. 17.

of the soul consisted in the loss of sanctifying grace and of all the supernatural gifts and benefits that accompany grace. Sanctifying grace is the life of the soul, and by its loss Adam and Eve became dead in the sight of God; they lost their supernatural life. This sin, with all its consequences, has come down from Adam to all his descendants; it is called original sin. The first effect of original sin is the loss of sanctifying grace, and until one is born again in Baptism he is spiritually dead; should he die in this state, he could never have eternal life in heaven. Through the operation of the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us by grace, received in Baptism, we are brought back to life again. Thus Baptism is a second birth, and being born, this time of God, we are the children of God. *After the remission of sin the chief effect of sanctifying grace is to make us children of God.*

A child has certain rights. It has a certain right to the possessions of its father, it has a certain right to be his heir. If

then, in Baptism we receive grace which makes us children of God, *we receive also the right to the possessions of God.* God is our Father; hence we have a right to live in His house, to enjoy the pleasures and happiness of His home. We become, through sanctifying grace, heirs of heaven. "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint-heirs with Christ; yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."[1] This means that if we remain true to God, and preserve sanctifying grace despite all the sufferings, temptations and allurements of the world, then we shall also possess heaven as our inheritance, then we shall possess God and all the riches, pleasures, and happiness which belong to Him, because we are His children. Such a promise is certainly worth our best endeavor, for "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be

[1] Rom. 8. 16, 17.

compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[1] When a man receives sanctifying grace, there is no change outwardly visible to the eye, the change is all within; but in eternity we shall see the beauty of the soul in sanctifying grace; then its beauty and glory shall be revealed. With the eye of faith we can see, even now, the excellence of grace; through faith we understand the greatness of the effects produced: it makes us just before God, *i.e.* our sins are blotted out; it makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. By grace we are preserved from eternal punishment which was our due — instead of eternal punishment eternal happiness awaits us. This change is worthy of our admiration and gratitude. Who can appreciate sufficiently the value of this gift, since it makes us worthy to call God our Father? It is, indeed, above every other gift, and God gives it to us, not because we have deserved it, but out of pure mercy and love.

[1] Rom. 8. 18.

Sanctifying grace is a gift of love — it is not earned by anything that we have done. God, seeing our miserable condition, was moved by mercy, and gave us the aid of His grace that we might be enabled to do good and merit heaven as a reward, and so be eternally happy. If God had not taken pity on us, we should have perished forever. "But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to hope, of life everlasting."

When did we receive sanctifying grace? Was it not when we were small, and unable to do anything good or bad, that we were baptized and cleansed from original sin, and so from sinners were made sons of God?

[1] Titus 3. 4–7.

The sinner, too, who, being baptized and having lost sanctifying grace by mortal sin, is again reinstated in grace and the friendship of God at a time, when, on account of the state of sin in which he is, he cannot do anything to please God. Grace is therefore evidently an undeserved gift of God. There are many children born in distant countries, where paganism still reigns; these do not receive the gift of Baptism with the benefits attached to it. Why were we chosen? There can be no other reason than the free will of God, who had mercy on us. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. . . . Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will."[1] On some of the islands of the South Sea there are now many good, believing Catholics; when the first Catholic missionaries arrived in those places they were persecuted and put to death. Did these people deserve the gift of faith and grace? Certainly not; they opposed

[1] Rom. 9. 16–18.

the mercy of God calling them to grace, and yet finally they received the gift of faith, and were baptized. It was the love of God that was the cause of all this; of themselves they had deserved the very opposite.

When we say that sanctifying grace is an undeserved gift we mean to say that it is undeserved on our part; we do not say that it has not been deserved at all. Jesus died to obtain grace for us. God gives us grace on account of the superabundant merits of Christ. "Justified freely by His grace, through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[1] Justification does not come to us through our own merits; it is gratis; it comes to us through the Redemption of Christ.

Since we have received this grace in Baptism without any merits of our own, purely through the kindness and mercy of God, we should show our gratitude to God for the love He has shown to us by looking upon grace as the most valuable gift that we can

[1] Rom. 3. 24.

possess. We should be anxious to preserve it and to have it ever in our hearts. Sanctifying grace differs from actual grace in this, that, whereas actual grace is only a passing gift, sanctifying grace remains in our soul until it is driven out by mortal sin. For this reason it is also called habitual grace.

Sanctifying grace is called *grace of justification* or simply *justification.* The Apostle says of Baptism by which we receive sanctifying grace: "But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God."[1] What do we mean by justification? A boy goes into an orchard and takes some apples. The orchard does not belong to his parents, and hence he is accused of stealing. He excuses himself by saying that the orchard belongs to his uncle, who told him that he might take all the apples he wished. If this story is true, is the boy deserving of punishment for taking the apples? Evidently not; he proved

[1] 1 Cor. 6. 11.

that what he did was not wrong; he justified himself. To justify one's self means, then, to clear one's self of the accusation of having done wrong. When our first parents sinned, God came to them and showed them their sin. They tried to justify themselves; Adam put the blame on Eve, and she blamed the serpent — but they could not justify themselves because they had only idle excuses to give. God punished them for their sin, but taking pity on them He promised to send them a Redeemer, who was to take away their sin and regain grace for them; He was to make good the harm done; He was to justify them. To justify can, therefore, also mean to make good a wrong. Justification does away with sin and makes good the harm done by sin; it restores us to the state of friendship with God, from which we fell through sin. Because by sanctifying grace sin is destroyed and man is made holy and just, it is called justifying grace.

Justification includes two things — the cleansing from sin and interior sanctifica-

tion. Hence the Apostle says, "You are washed," *i.e.* you are freed from sins, "You are sanctified," *i.e.* you have been made holy and pleasing to God, you have been born again, "You are justified," *i.e.* freed from sin and sanctified. To be "justified in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ," signifies that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, we receive forgiveness of our sins, and are made holy and just in the eyes of God. "Justified in the Spirit of our God," means that we receive forgiveness of our sins and interior sanctity from the Holy Ghost, because to Him, as the love of the Father, is ascribed sanctification.

The teaching of the Catholic Church on justification is, as we have seen, that by sanctifying grace the sinner is placed in a state of interior supernatural sanctity. By justification we mean that the soul is freed from sin, reborn to a new life, and renewed; that it is made holy and pleasing in the eyes of God. The heretics of the sixteenth century said that justification was not a remission of sins, but consisted only in cover-

ing them up; that God, on account of the merits of Jesus Christ, did not punish our sins, if we believed in the Redemption of Christ. According to them the sins are not forgiven, but only overlooked; they are still in the soul, but on account of the merits of Jesus we are not punished for them. If this were true, there would be no real justification, there would be no raising of the sinner to a supernatural life, the soul would not be really healed of its infirmities. But we know from Sacred Scripture that "by His bruises we have been healed."[1] St. Paul teaches the Christians, "You have been washed, you have been sanctified," and again, "We were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest; but God (who is rich in mercy), for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved), and hath raised us up together; and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus."[2]

[1] Is. 53. 5. [2] Eph. 2. 3 *seqq.*

Here the Apostle clearly teaches that justification consists in raising the spiritually dead to life, that it consists in transferring the sinner from a state of wrath to a state of the love of God, that it is a uniting of him who was a sinner with Jesus, and making him worthy of the kingdom of heaven. This is evidently a good deal more than merely covering over sin, and not punishing sin, which still remains in the soul.

Sanctifying grace is often compared to a garment. We hear the expression that our first parents were created, clothed with the garments of sanctifying grace — or that in Baptism we receive the garment of innocence. To indicate this the priest lays a white garment on the child when he baptizes. This is a figure of speech; it does not mean that the soul is only clothed externally with innocence, and that inwardly the sin might still remain; no, it means that just as a white garment is an ornament which makes the body beautiful, so the soul is made beautiful by grace, that by grace the soul is

adorned as the bride of Jesus Christ. There can be no covering up of inward ugliness, so that the all-seeing eye of God should not see it. That a soul be beautiful in the eyes of God, it must be all beautiful, not merely dressed in a beautiful garment.

We will, then, believe with the Catholic Church that by sanctifying grace man is really sanctified and justified, *i.e.* that by sanctifying grace sin is truly blotted out, and that the soul is interiorly sanctified, so that "there is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh."[1] Through sanctifying grace they have been "renewed in the spirit of their mind, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth."[2] Born of God they are the children of God and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth

[1] Rom. 8. 1. [2] Eph. 4. 23.

not us, because it knew not Him. Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."

[1] 1 John 3. 1.

IV

HOW JUSTIFICATION IS OBTAINED

BEFORE the sin of our first parents the most perfect order existed in the world; in nature one thing was subject to the other, one order of beings to the other, and all lower nature was subject to man, who was the lord of creation. In man himself the same perfect order existed: the lower faculties were subject to the higher. All creation with man at its head was subject to God, the Maker of all things, but when sin came all this was changed; sin brought disorder. The disorder caused by sin is especially seen in the human soul; the image of the Creator is not as clear as it was when the soul was created; sin has blurred it. This sad condition of the soul must not last, the soul in that condition cannot be pleasing to God,

the former happy relation with its Maker must be reëstablished. The soul must be justified. To obtain justification and to retain it is the most necessary and most important task of man in this life; it is his life's work.

How can man obtain justification? No one can be justified except through grace obtained through the merits of Jesus Christ. This we have already seen, but the question still remains, How are the merits of Christ applied to our soul that we may be justified through them? *Before the institution of the Old Law* men were justified by the belief and hope in the promised Redeemer, joined to a good life. *In the Old Law* the Israelites were justified through their belief and hope in the Redeemer to come, and by the observance of the Law of God and the reception of the Old Testament sacraments. The children who had not yet obtained the use of reason must have been justified by belonging to the chosen people of God without any act on their part.

In the New Law children are justified by Baptism without any act of their own. They are baptized in the faith of the Church. Their duties as regards Baptism begin when they receive the use of their reason, and so become able to do good. With grown persons it is quite different. Grace does the greater part in the work of justification, but man must also do his part; he must coöperate with the grace of God. God and man work together, and so the work of justification is performed. Let us now briefly consider how this work of sanctification is brought about.

The work of justification is begun by God. He gives man the gratuitous gift of preventing grace, which is no other than actual grace. Actual grace has various names; when it is given to us to begin a good work it is called *preventing grace*, that is, grace that goes before the good work, for this is the meaning of "preventing," from the Latin word "praevenire," *to go before;* when it is given us to help us perform a good work

already begun, it is called *concomitant grace* or accompanying grace; and when it is given to help us complete a good work, it is called *subsequent* or following *grace*. We need God's help to begin, continue, and finish every good and salutary work; we need therefore for every good work God's preventing, concomitant, and subsequent grace. The work of justification, which is the greatest of all, must therefore be begun by the grace of God. God so acts on our intellect and free will that, through the light of His actual grace we recognize our helpless condition, and so moves our will that we turn to Him and seek help from Him.

This merciful action of God on the understanding and will of man is often joined to some external event. Let us see an example. We read in the life of St. Norbert[1] that in his youth he had been very careless, that he had fallen in with bad companions, and was on the broad road that leads to perdition. One day as he was riding on horseback to

[1] Bollandists', *Acta Sanct.* Junii 6.

meet some of these bad companions, the lightning struck the ground before his horse, and he heard a voice upbraiding him for his bad life. Norbert, like St. Paul, asked, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"[1] And he received the answer to leave sin and to do good. From that day on Norbert was a changed man. He left his evil companions, became a priest, and converted many sinners and heretics to Christ. He also founded the order of the Præmonstratensians. In this way God dealt with this young man, and called him by His grace to become one of His most faithful servants. The internal grace, which God gave Norbert to see his deplorable condition and to move him to repentance, was joined to some external sign, — a stroke of lightning. Had God not given him His grace, Norbert, instead of becoming a saint and leading a great multitude of people to God, would have been lost himself, and in all probability would have been the cause of the damnation of many others.

[1] Acts 9. 6.

At times the grace of conversion is occasioned by the hearing of the word of God, the advice of a friend, or some other external means, to turn the mind and heart to God. These external things only accompany the grace of God; grace itself is internal; it is an illumination of the mind and a moving of the heart. It is not necessary that it should always be joined to something external, and, in fact, the ordinary way in which God calls the sinner is not through these extraordinary outer helps. How often it happens that the thought comes to one, What would become of me if I should die now? I know that I am in great danger of being lost forever if I remain in sin. I will make all things right; I will go to confession. These thoughts are from the grace of God, which is calling the sinner to repentance; they are the effect of the preventing grace of God.

God is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."[1] From Him the beginning

[1] Apoc. 1. 8.

of justification must come. He makes that beginning, for every one receives sufficient grace to be saved. He loved us first, and even while we are sinners He loves us and seeks us; He wishes to bring us back to Him; He goes out to seek the sheep that was lost; He calls us to repentance. God gives every sinner His grace, but the sinner cannot be idle; he, too, must do something; he must accept the grace of God and coöperate with it. How must man coöperate with the grace of God? *He must believe in God, hope in Him, and begin to love him as the fountain of all justice, receive the sacrament of Baptism, or, if he be already baptized, the sacrament of Penance.*[1] We will first consider justification through the sacrament of Baptism. Children receive sanctifying grace without any act of their own, as we have already mentioned; the question is, therefore, entirely concerning those that have the use of reason. Of these St. Augustine says,

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. 6, c. 6.

"He who has created thee without thee, will not justify thee without thee."[1]

We must bear in mind that without the grace of God we can do nothing for our salvation, and that if certain acts are required by which we dispose ourselves for justification, even in these acts we are dependent on the grace of God. God it is who worketh in us the willing and the doing of every good work. The grace of God must move us to every good work, and must assist us in the doing of it.

With the grace of God, therefore, the sinner must believe, hope, and begin to love God and repent of his sins. By faith, hope, and love or charity, as a preparation for Baptism, are not understood the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity; these are only infused into the soul of man through Baptism; but they are acts performed under the influence of actual grace. An example of how men must prepare themselves for Baptism we have in the manner in which

[1] Serm. 15, *de Verb. Apost.* c. 11.

the people of Jerusalem received the first sermon of St. Peter,[1] and were converted by it. God made the beginning by enlightening them through the words of St. Peter and by the internal light of His grace which He gave them. What did they do on their part? They believed the words of the Apostle; they believed that Jesus, whom they had put to death, was the promised Messias. In their hearts arose the desire that the promises made by God, through the prophets, might be fulfilled in them, that is, they hoped for supernatural benefits. By asking, "What shall we do?" they expressed their willingness to do the will of God, that is, they began to love God. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."[2] We read further that three thousand were baptized and did penance. To do penance means to be sorry for one's sins, to propose not to sin any more, to lead a good life, and to make satisfaction for the sins committed.

The necessity of these acts of faith, hope,

[1] Acts. 2. [2] Matt. 19. 17.

love, and repentance we learn from the teaching of the Catholic Church. As regards *faith* our Lord teaches us its necessity in the instruction He gave His apostles: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[1] Our Lord says that we must first believe and then be baptized; he that believeth not shall be condemned, even if he be baptized. This belief must be from the heart; the mere outward profession is not sufficient. This we see from the example of the eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia whom St. Philip instructed. After he had been instructed he said to Philip, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest."[2] After the eunuch had answered that he believed that Jesus is the Son of God, Philip baptized him. Faith is, therefore, the first requisite for justifica-

[1] Mark 16. 16. [2] Acts 8. 36, 37.

tion; it is the ground and root of justification.

Hope in God must be joined to faith in Him. That the sinner be justified he must believe and hope in God. Faith is the foundation of hope. If we believe in God and therefore believe His promises, we naturally hope to receive that which He has promised. If we believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died on the cross to save us from sin, to make us children of God and heirs of heaven, we will naturally hope to benefit by this mercy of God if we do what He demands of us. He who wishes to be justified must therefore believe in God, he must believe in Jesus, the Son of God, he must believe that Jesus redeemed us by His death on the cross, and that God will pardon his sins on account of the merits of Jesus Christ; he must believe that God will give him grace to live a good life and merit the eternal happiness of heaven. With belief must be joined the hope of obtaining heaven through the grace given him by the merits of his

Redeemer. Faith without hope is nothing. Of what use is it to me to believe that Jesus died for me if I do not hope to be saved through His death? It is precisely hope that lifts us up to God and gives us strength to do His will and obey His commandments.

Besides faith and hope a *beginning of the love of God* is also necessary. We say a beginning of love, because the fulness of the love of God belongs to those that are already sanctified by grace. Justification is nothing but the passing from the state of enmity to that of the love of God. He who wishes to be justified must long to be holy and to be a child of God. This longing is nothing but the beginning of the love of God. Love has various degrees, the first of which is the keeping of the commandments of God. "Who keeps My commandments, he it is that loves Me," says our Lord. The beginning of the love of God is, therefore, the firm purpose to avoid sin and to do the will of God.

One that really loves God, or at least is

beginning to love Him truly, will necessarily *detest sin and wish to sin no more.* This, too, then, is necessary for justification — that we repent of our sins. The Church has always taught that it is necessary for justification that the sinner do something on his part and that faith alone is not sufficient; but that besides faith he must have hope, the beginning of love, and repentance for his sins. When any one wished to be admitted to the communion of the Church it was always the practice that for some time before Baptism such a person was instructed in the teaching of the Church, that he had to practice faith by hearing the word of God, that he had to practice hope by prayer, and love by the keeping of the commandments of God. That any one that had the use of reason should be admitted to Baptism without faith, hope, love, and repentance for sins committed, was unknown in the Church. Those that were preparing for Baptism were called catechumens. It is to the catechumens that St. Cyril of Jerusalem

addresses the following admonition: "Prepare thy heart for the reception of the doctrine and the sacred mysteries. Pray frequently that God may make thee worthy of the celestial and eternal mysteries. Neither by day nor by night cease from prayer, and as soon as sleep has gone from thine eyes let the spirit be given to prayer. As soon as thou perceivest an improper thought to arise in thy soul, have recourse to the memory of the judgment. Keep thy spirit to study, and thou shalt escape thoughts that are unwholesome. Keep thy soul from the snares of the devil and secure in hope, and thou shalt be an heir of heaven." In this and like manner did St. Cyril instruct his catechumens for forty days before he admitted them to Baptism. He would never have done this if he had thought that nothing but faith was required for Baptism. On the contrary, it was always the persuasion of the Fathers that a thorough preparation was necessary, in order that one might be raised from a state of enmity to that of friendship

with God; to make one who had been a sinner a child of God and an heir of the happiness of heaven. The Church never believed that one in whom so great a change was to take place could be entirely passive and do nothing on his part. Man has understanding and free will; he must exercise these faculties in the work of justification — the understanding by subjecting it to the yoke of faith, the will by turning from evil and seeking God.

This same method is followed to-day. When a person comes to the priest, and makes known his intention of becoming a Catholic, the priest does not immediately proceed to baptize such a one, but he first leads him to believe, and for this reason he instructs him in the Catholic religion; hope is excited by the practice of frequent prayer; finally the convert must avoid sin, and make frequent acts of contrition. Just before Baptism the person to be baptized must recite the Apostles' Creed and the Our Father, and he must renounce the works of

Satan. Even when children are baptized, these things are not omitted; the sponsors perform them in the name of the child. The Church shows by this that she believes that man must do his part in the work of justification; God makes the beginning, and continually accompanies the acts of the creature with His grace.

These acts of faith, hope, love, and repentance are only the preparation to receive the grace of justification; they do not justify. Justification comes through the sacrament of Baptism, according to the words of our Lord, "Unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."[1] Baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation, so that no one can be saved without it. Only in case that it is impossible to receive the Baptism of water, the intense desire of it, joined with perfect contrition — that is, sorrow for sin out of the love of God, can replace it; this is called the Baptism of desire. Suffering death for the

[1] John 3. 5.

sake of Christ, and thus becoming a martyr, can also take the place of Baptism by water; this we call the Baptism of blood. These are extraordinary ways of receiving the grace of justification; the ordinary manner is by the Baptism of water. The Baptism of desire and the Baptism of blood give sanctifying grace only when the Baptism of water is impossible.

In the New Law children receive sanctifying grace, and thus are justified by Baptism without any act on their part. Adults must believe in God, hope in Him, begin to love Him, and must repent of their sins; then they must be baptized in order to receive sanctifying grace and become just in the eyes of God.

In Baptism we receive sanctifying grace, and so are justified; this grace is also called habitual grace because it remains in the soul and adorns it. However, we are not to understand this as though sanctifying grace could never be lost when it has once been received. Sanctifying grace remains in the

soul until it is forcibly expelled by mortal sin. He who has lost sanctifying grace cannot please God, and cannot be saved whilst in this state; he is in the same condition as one that has not yet been baptized. In fact, he is in a worse condition, since he has also to answer for the abuse of the mercy of God which has been shown him in Baptism. Of such a one our Lord says, "The last state of that man is made worse than the first."[1]

Is there then no remedy left for one who has lost the grace of his Baptism? Is there no means of freeing ourselves of the sins committed after Baptism and of regaining the friendship and grace of God? If God had said, I will give you My grace, and forgive you your sins, but after that you must remain faithful; if you commit sin again, you will be lost; if He had said this, we could not complain. Through Baptism we receive sanctifying grace, which is a priceless treasure, and hence to throw it away and to

[1] Matt. 12. 45.

esteem it of so little value as to give it for some useless gratification of the senses, is the deepest ingratitude. Still God in His mercy has wished to pardon even this, if we repent of our sins. He has prepared a remedy by which those that lose sanctifying grace obtained in Baptism may regain it and become once more the children of God and heirs of heaven.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, has come to seek and to save those that were lost. In His infinite mercy and goodness, He has taken pity on man, on account of his natural weakness and the inclination to evil which remains as an effect of original sin, and has established a special sacrament by which those that have lost the grace received in Baptism may regain it and thus be saved from eternal damnation. This sacrament is the sacrament of Penance. Jesus instituted this sacrament after His resurrection from the dead, when He said to the apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and

whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."[1] Again, at another time, He told His apostles, "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."[2] Christ has given His apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church, the power to forgive sins in His name. This power is exercised in the sacrament of Penance, where the sins are forgiven through the absolution of the priest, whenever any one is heartily sorry for his sins, confesses them sincerely, and is willing to make satisfaction for them.

Through the sacrament of Penance they that have had the misfortune to lose the sanctifying grace received in Baptism can be saved. Penance is often called a second plank after shipwreck. A man's life is compared to a sea voyage: by Baptism he is put on a ship that is to carry him safely to the port of heaven; when he commits

[1] John 20. 23. [2] Matt. 18. 18.

a mortal sin, he is, so to speak, shipwrecked, and unless a plank or some other object be near him to which he can cling, he will certainly be drowned; no power of his own can ever save him. The sacrament of Penance is such a plank after shipwreck. Penance is also called the laborious Baptism of tears. Just as in Baptism we are cleansed from our sins by water and the Holy Ghost, so in penance the place of water is taken by tears of contrition. This, however, does not mean that we must actually weep; we can be sorry for our sins even without shedding tears. Tears are a sign of sorrow, and therefore we call penance a Baptism of tears merely to indicate that a deep sorrow for sin is absolutely necessary in this sacrament. In the early days of the Church penance was much more difficult than it is now. In those days they that had sinned were often compelled to do public penance for their sins; they had to remain for months, and even years, outside the church doors during some parts of

the Mass, ask the prayers of those that entered the church, and so profess themselves to all the people as sinners. To-day the priest still gives a penance to be performed, for this is a part of the sacrament; but the penances are much lighter and rarely public.

The Church has always believed that sins committed after Baptism are forgiven through the sacrament of Penance, and has at all times administered this sacrament. For the worthy reception of this sacrament the sinner must do something on his part, in order that he may again obtain the grace of God. To regain justification, lost by mortal sin, he must believe, hope, begin to love God, and repent of his sins, and then receive the sacrament of Penance.

As in the justification of one who is not baptized, so also in the justification of one who has lost sanctifying grace by mortal sin, God makes the beginning. God, by His grace, calls the lost sheep; He invites him to return. The occasion may be a sermon, an instruction, the voice of the

priest or of a friend, a missionary, or it may be the voice of conscience. The grace of God is internal, but He often joins it to some sign or event. The sinner must obey this call of the grace of God; if he neglects it, he cannot be justified without it. He must allow himself to be led by the grace of God; under its influence he must believe in Jesus and hope for His forgiveness. Faith is the root from which all justification springs; without faith we can do nothing to please God. If we believe in Jesus and His infinite mercy, we will also hope in His forgiveness. Then if we are sorry for our sins and resolve to avoid sin in the future, we are beginning to love God.

Now that the sinner has, with the help of divine grace, prepared his soul by these acts for the reception of sanctifying grace, he must receive the sacrament of Penance. Christ ordained this by the words which He spoke to His apostles, "Whose sins," etc.[1] By these words Jesus instituted

[1] John 20. 22.

the sacrament of Penance, and ordained that the priest examine into the state of the soul of the penitent and forgive him his sins in the name of Jesus Christ if he finds him properly disposed. It is true sins can be forgiven also without the actual reception of the sacrament of Penance by an act of perfect contrition, that is, by sorrow for sin out of the motive of the love of God; but there must always be included in this contrition the resolution of confessing one's sins as soon as possible. It is impossible to be sorry for one's sins out of the motive of the love of God, without wishing to comply also with the commandments He has given. God has ordained that the ordinary way to receive forgiveness of the sins committed after Baptism is the sacrament of Penance; hence perfect contrition forgives sins only when we are willing to comply with the ordinary arrangements God has made for the remission of sin.

We have indeed cause to be grateful to God for the institution of the sacrament

of Penance; for how few there are who retain pure and unsoiled the garment of baptismal innocence! How few there would be to obtain the kingdom of heaven if God had not made provision for the forgiveness of the sins committed after Baptism! This sacrament, therefore, is a testimonial of the mercy and goodness of God toward us. By means of it the obtaining of eternal happiness has been made comparatively easy. After our ingratitude, God could have prescribed most difficult conditions for the regaining of sanctifying grace, but He has preferred to make the return to Him possible, and even easy, for every one. All that He requires is that we detest our sins, resolve to serve Him faithfully in the future, confess our sins to His representative, and accept the penance imposed on us by him. It is true it may seem difficult to some to confess their sins to another; but sin is an act of rebellion and pride, and is therefore most appropriately forgiven by an act of humility.

With the help of the grace of God, the false shame which would keep us from telling our sins can be overcome; we must take this medicine, which may seem a little bitter at times, if we wish to regain the health of the soul. Besides, God has ordained that these sins shall never be revealed by the priest. The priest must suffer death rather than make known the least sin heard in confession.

After Baptism there is no remedy for sin except the sacrament of Penance. We may fast, give alms, pray, perform the greatest works of piety, but unless we are willing to confess our sins, and so comply with the will of God, it is all in vain. God has willed this, and His will must be done. If, on the contrary, after proper preparation, we confess our sins candidly to the priest, and he, by the power given him by Jesus Christ, says, "I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," then our sins are forgiven, and sanctifying grace again enters

our souls; we are once more children of God; once more heaven is our right. Then we should rejoice and thank God with the Psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and let all that is within me praise His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and never forget all He hath done for thee: who forgiveth all thy iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion."[1]

[1] Psalm 102. 1–4.

V

ON THE INFUSED VIRTUES IN GENERAL, AND ON FAITH IN PARTICULAR

THE INFUSED VIRTUES

What do you call those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him?

Those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him, are called the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

By sanctifying grace man is justified, that is, all his sins are remitted, and he is interiorly sanctified and made pleasing to God; he becomes a child of God, and has a right to the eternal happiness of heaven. As a child and servant of God, he must know God, his Father and Lord, he must hope for the reward which God has promised him for his fidelity, and he must love God above all things. All these things follow from sanctifying grace, which makes us children of God. Hence the catechism asks in this

place the question, "What do you call those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him?"

"Those graces or gifts of God by which we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him, are called the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity."

The catechism calls them graces or gifts to indicate that, just like grace, they are given without any merit on our part, purely through the mercy and goodness of God. Without sanctifying grace we do not have the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Now we know that sanctifying grace is a free gift of God; the virtues, therefore, which are infused, that is, poured into the soul, with it, and on account of it, are also gratuitous. God gives them to us without any merit of our own. Through sanctifying grace God gives us a supernatural life; life shows itself in actions. We have our natural life through the soul, which is the source of life; this life shows itself through the acts of

our faculties, — we walk, we think, we will, — and by these actions it is known that we have life; they are its manifestations. Grace raises our soul to a supernatural life; this life, too, must manifest itself in some acts; it, too, must bring with it its supernatural inclinations. These supernatural inclinations are the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity; by means of them we can believe, hope, and love God, in a supernatural manner, just as we can know and love Him naturally by means of our natural faculties of understanding and will. Grace raises the soul itself to the supernatural order, and the divine virtues elevate the faculties of intellect and will.

These divine virtues differ from the natural virtues. By repeating a certain good act frequently we gain ease and facility in performing that act; so, if a boy is always attentive and ready to obey, he acquires through this a great facility to obey; his first impulse is to obey, it becomes easy to him; we say that he has acquired the vir-

tue of obedience. From such acquired virtues the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity differ very much; they are not obtained through our own efforts by a repetition of acts, but they are poured into the soul by God with sanctifying grace; they are not natural, but supernatural. The difference might be illustrated by an example. Let us suppose that we have a young tree; by great care we can make that tree bear fruit, better in quality and greater in abundance, but we cannot make it bear a different kind of fruit; so, also, by our own efforts we may perform acts of virtue more perfectly, but we cannot perform any act which is supernatural. If, however, a branch of a different kind is engrafted upon the tree of which we spoke, then it will bring forth also a different kind of fruit; so it is with the infused virtues, — by them a supernatural element is, so to say, engrafted upon our natural faculties, and on this account we are enabled to believe, hope, and love in a higher, a supernatural, manner.

That, *by the sacrament of Baptism, the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity are infused into the soul*, we learn from the teaching of the Council of Trent, "Through the Holy Ghost the charity of God is diffused in the hearts of those who are justified and inheres in them, whence in justification man receives from Jesus Christ together with the remission of sin, faith, hope, and charity."[1] That these are not merely the acts of faith, hope, and charity, we infer from the fact that the Council teaches that faith, hope, and charity inhere in the soul, they remain as something permanent. This can only be understood in the sense that they are permanent virtues; acts are passing, and cannot be said to inhere in the soul. The Church therefore teaches that in Baptism there is infused into the soul something that remains, by virtue of which we believe in God, hope in Him, and love Him. Nature gives to children an instinct, as it were, by which they know their parents, trust

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. VI, can. 7.

them, and love them. There is something beautiful in the trust that a child puts in his parents. How he listens to their words and receives without the least doubt all that they tell him! His parents may be without any great education or learning, still the child will accept without questioning whatever he hears from his father. He believes his father to be able to protect him against all enemies; he puts the highest trust in him. As for the love a child bears toward his parents, it goes above all other human love; the parents may be in lowly circumstances, yet a child will prefer his parents to all other men and women; he would rather be with his parents than with the wealthiest and most influential persons of the world. By grace we become the children of God. "And because you are sons, God hath sent the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father."[1] By grace, then, God also gives us the instinct of children; by grace we know Him as our Father; by grace we trust and

[1] Gal. 4. 6.

hope in Him; by grace we love Him, and cry, "Abba, Father." It is most reasonable, therefore, to believe that, since by grace God makes us His children, He also infuses into our hearts with grace the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. By these virtues we show ourselves His children, and as such we must know Him in a supernatural way, a knowledge which comes by faith; we must trust in Him, and this is by hope; we must love Him, as a child loves his father, which we do by the virtue of charity. Of these three virtues St. Paul speaks when he says, "Now there remain faith, hope, and charity: these three; but the greater of these is charity."[1]

These virtues are infused into the soul with sanctifying grace; by it we become children of God and receive on this account the virtues which a child of God must have. It is true we said in a former chapter that a grown person must believe in God, must hope in Him and begin to love Him even before justification; but these acts do not

[1] 1 Cor. 13. 13.

flow from a virtue which resides permanently in the soul. They are done under the influence of actual grace; they are not permanent virtues flowing from sanctifying grace. The divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity remain in the soul. They are not passing, transient acts, but rather the root from which such acts spring. The divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity are infused into the soul at Baptism. *They are increased by the worthy reception of the sacraments and by meritorious good works.* The Church teaches us that the worthy reception of the sacraments is always productive of grace. Now if the sacraments always give grace, then the sacraments of the living, since they are received by those that already live by the life of grace, as also the sacraments of the dead, when received by one who is in the state of grace, must give an increase of sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is increased in the soul by the worthy reception of the sacraments and by good works; for the Church teaches that by good works we can

merit an increase of sanctifying grace, and that grace is given to every one according to his disposition and coöperation. By sanctifying grace we are made "No more strangers and foreigners: but fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God;"[1] by the increase of grace through the worthy reception of the sacraments and by good works we go from virtue to virtue, and are "renewed from day to day." "He that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still."[2] If by the sacraments and good works sanctifying grace is increased, then it follows that the divine virtues, too, are increased, since they are infused with sanctifying grace and flow from it, just as the natural faculties are derived from the soul. If he that is just is by grace justified still, then — since the Church teaches that justification consists in the remission of sin and the renovation of the soul through the infusion of grace and the divine virtues — it follows that by an increase of justification both sanctifying grace

[1] Eph. 2. 19. [2] Apoc. 22. 11.

and the divine virtues are increased. Hence the apostles prayed, "Increase our faith,"[1] and the Apostle wished the Romans, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost,"[2] and prayed for the faithful, "That their charity abound more and more." The Church, too, on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost prays in the Mass, "Omnipotent, eternal God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and charity."

Do the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity always remain in the soul, once they have been produced by the operation of the Holy Ghost, through sanctifying grace, or *are they lost again when man loses grace through sin?* This question cannot be answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no.' It is certain that the divine virtue of charity or the love of God is lost when, through mortal sin, sanctifying grace is lost. Through the love of God we become the friends of God, but we cannot be His friends if we are in the

[1] Luke 17. 5. [2] Rom. 15. 13.

state of sin, and therefore are His enemies. One that loves God will be loved by Him, and hence cannot but be a friend of God. "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him."[1] Whom God loves, him He also gives sanctifying grace. God's love is not like our love; we love people because they are good, but God's love makes them good, holy, and just. God's love gives them sanctifying grace. Charity, if not the same as sanctifying grace, is so closely connected with it that it is impossible to separate the two; no one can have charity without having also sanctifying grace, and no one can have sanctifying grace without having also the virtue of charity or the love of God. Since faith, hope, and charity are infused together with sanctifying grace, and since charity is lost with the loss of grace, we would expect that the same be true also of faith and hope. However, by a special dispensation of God's mercy, He has wished

[1] John 14. 21.

that these virtues remain in the soul, even after grace and charity have been lost by mortal sin, so that the return of the sinner to God might be easier. Although faith and hope, like charity, are derived from sanctifying grace, yet just as heat, which is caused by fire, can remain even after the fire is put out, so also the virtues of faith and hope remain after the source, sanctifying grace, is expelled from the soul. By faith we are Christians, and it is clear that one does not cease to be a Christian when he commits a mortal sin; and even a sinner can and must hope that through the mercy of God his sin will be forgiven and that he will finally be saved. This is the teaching of the Church in the Council of Trent. "If any man say that by the loss of sanctifying grace faith is always lost with it, or that faith which remains, although no living faith, is not true faith, or that he who has faith without charity is not a Christian, let him be anathema."[1] The Church teaches us, therefore, that faith is not

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. VI, can. 28.

lost by every mortal sin, but that faith without grace and charity is dead — that is, that without grace, although we have faith, we cannot do anything to merit the reward of heaven; we cannot even merit grace. Faith becomes living faith by charity; and of one who has living faith St. Paul says, "The just man liveth by faith."[1] Writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul says, "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."[2] He supposes, therefore, that we can have faith so strong as to be able to work miracles without charity and grace, but such faith would avail us nothing for heaven; it is dead. Although by this faith we can do nothing to merit heaven, it is not useless. God, in His mercy, wished to leave us faith and hope, so that we would be better disposed to do penance and return to Him by real sorrow for our sins. How good and merciful God is to us! He gives us, without any merit on our part, His grace of justification, and

[1] Rom. 1. 17. [2] 1 Cor. 13. 2.

even after we have abused this gift, He still leaves us the virtues of faith and hope, that we may return to Him. "The Lord is gracious and merciful: patient and plenteous in mercy. The Lord is sweet to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works."[1]

ON FAITH

What is faith?

Faith is a divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.

Faith, hope, and charity are infused into the soul with sanctifying grace; they are the constant companions of grace; grace cannot be in the soul without them. Faith, hope, and charity constitute the interior sanctity of justification. Our catechism for this reason treats here specially of these three virtues, and first of faith.

Faith is a virtue, that is, it is not merely a transient act, nor even a series of acts, but it is something permanent; it is a habit that

[1] Psalm 144. 7, 8, 9.

remains in the soul. It is called *divine* because it comes from God, who infuses it into the soul, together with sanctifying grace, without any merit on our part; it has to do with God, who is the object of faith, for by faith we believe in Him; His truthfulness is the motive of our belief. When we learn in school that there is such a country as China, which we never saw, we believe this to be true because we trust others who tell us so. This is human faith. When, however, God reveals some truth we accept this truth, *because God is truthful;* then we have *divine* faith. By faith we believe *firmly*, that is without doubt or hesitation. We accept the truths He has revealed, and all of them, because He is truth itself; and if we believe Him on account of His veracity, there is no reason for doubting any of the truths He has made known. Our catechism adds the words *which God has revealed*, and this means that we believe these truths because God has revealed them. God's truthfulness is the motive of our

belief. Let us examine these things a little more in detail.

To believe is to hold something for true, not because we understand it, but because we trust him who tells us. In this way we believe many things. We accept on faith or believe many things that our parents tell us, and things that we learn in school. We do not know whether they are true or false, but because we trust those who tell us of them, we hold them as true: we believe them. Faith is therefore an assent of the mind, on account of the truthfulness of one who instructs us.

At times we may doubt the word of another because we think he does not know the truth or the falsehood concerning that of which he speaks. He may not wish to deceive us, but he may be mistaken himself, or, if he knows the truth, he may have some reason for not telling us. In that case he would deceive us. Neither of these reasons holds with God. He knows all things, and He is all-holy, and therefore cannot deceive us nor be deceived. By divine faith we

believe firmly, without any hesitation, all that God makes known to us, because He cannot be deceived nor can He deceive us. By faith we come to the knowledge of God; we come to know Him more perfectly than we could know Him by the light of our own reason; we come to a knowledge of truths which we could not know by our own reason, such as His having designed us to become His sons and to see Him forever face to face in heaven, etc. These things we could not know if we were left to ourselves; by faith we believe them because we know that God does not deceive us. Faith is, therefore, something of the intellect; what reason and intellect are for us in the natural order, faith is for us in the supernatural order. "By faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God."[1] Faith is supernatural knowledge. Faith is necessary to salvation, for "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[2]

[1] Heb. 11. 3. [2] Mark 16. 16.

Faith is, therefore, a salutary act; but we can do nothing for our salvation by our natural powers. Hence faith is supernatural. "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God."[1] Without grace our faith would be mere natural faith; to believe, so as to please God, we need the assistance of His all-powerful grace.

The motive of belief, in order that our faith be supernatural, must be the veracity of God. We believe what God has revealed because on account of His infinite sanctity He cannot deceive us. "God is not as a man, that He should lie, nor as the son of man, that He should be changed."[2] If we believe that God became man and dwelt amongst us, it is because God who is all truth has revealed this to us. Not to believe something that God has made known is to call His truthfulness into question; it is to doubt the word of God. From this we see how foolish those men

[1] Eph. 2. 8. [2] Num. 23. 19.

are who accept so easily everything that men tell them, and yet say that they cannot believe the things God has revealed. They will believe the testimony of men rather than that of God. Men who call themselves scientific will often oppose the small light of their intelligence to the omniscience of God, and expect us to believe them rather than the word of God, who knows all things. They pretend to know better than He who has made all things. It often happens that they are not certain themselves of what they say, and change their opinions from year to year, and with all that, they think they can ridicule those who reject their notions, and prefer to believe in God, who is all knowledge and all truth. Because the motive of our faith is the wisdom and truth of God, our faith is a *firm* one. It is more certain than any other truth which we get by our own natural understanding. An example of this firmness of belief we see in Abraham, "Who against hope believed in hope,

that he might be made the father of many nations, according to that which was said to him: So shall thy seed be. And he was not weak in faith, . . . and therefore it was reputed to him unto justice."[1] Abraham had been promised by God that he should be the father of many people; naturally speaking there was every reason for him to doubt this promise, but he never doubted the word of God; he knew that what God said must be true, and that all that God promised must be fulfilled, no matter how improbable it might seem. This was the kind of faith that God wanted, and "it was reputed to him unto justice." Let us learn from the example of Abraham to believe firmly all that God has revealed and proposes for our belief; His word is more than the intellect of any man, or even of all men put together, for He has made them all. The wisdom of man will pass away, but God's word will always be true. "Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass."[2]

[1] Rom. 4. 18–22. [2] Matt. 24. 35.

Because the motive of divine faith is the veracity of God, it follows that *our faith must be universal, i.e.* we cannot have divine faith unless we are willing to believe all God has revealed. This is clear in itself: if we believe because God who is truth itself has spoken, we must believe all that He has revealed. One who would believe some of the truths which God has revealed, and reject the others, would set himself up as a judge of the truthfulness of God. Such a one would, as St. Augustine said to the heretics of his day, not believe God, but himself. He would believe not because God revealed the truth, but because the truth pleased him. As if he said to God, "I will believe those things which please me, and which I see to be true, but I will not believe you when I do not understand how that which you reveal can be true." Such a one would insult God, and practically call Him a liar, or would at least say that it is possible for God to be deceived or to deceive us. The same must be said of him who, not wishing to

accept some truth which God has revealed, denies that God has revealed it. Such a man tries to produce in himself a voluntary ignorance of what God has revealed. He knows that God has made known this truth, but he attempts to blind himself, that he may be able to deny the truth which does not please him. If we wish to be faithful to God, we must believe *all* that He has revealed, and this because He can neither deceive nor be deceived. We cannot set our own reason above God, and judge of what we wish to believe and what we do not wish to believe. If we have divine faith, we will believe all that God has made known; if we reject even one article, then we have not the faith which comes from God, for we believe our own reason and not the word of God. We must believe all that God has revealed, even if it is above our understanding. God's intellect is infinite; He knows infinitely more than we can understand. If, therefore, He wishes to make some of these truths known to us,

we must accept them with joy. Such truths we call mysteries. God has revealed some mysteries to us, such as the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, *i.e.* that God is one in nature but three in person, that each of these persons is God, and that still there is but one God. We cannot understand how this is, but God, who is all truth, has said so, therefore we believe it to be true. Faith is obscure by its nature; if we understood all the truths that God makes known to us, there would be no merit in faith, as we could not but accept them; but on account of the darkness that surrounds the truths of faith, we believe because of the truthfulness of God, and not because we see these things to be true; this is real faith. "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not."[1] If we understood all that faith teaches us, we would not hold these truths because of God's truthfulness, but on account of our understanding. This would destroy the

[1] Heb. 11. 1.

very nature of faith; it would become natural knowledge and cease to be faith; it would destroy all merit. We do not think that a man should be rewarded for admitting that two and two are four; he cannot help admitting it, because he sees that it is true; but when we believe that in God there are three persons, who are but one God, we do not understand this truth, and we accept it only because God has said so. Such faith honors God and is deserving of reward.

Faith is necessary for salvation, for "without faith it is impossible to please God."[1] The virtue of faith is infused with sanctifying grace, and hence no one can be saved without faith any more than he can be saved without grace. Children are born deprived of sanctifying grace; they are subject to original sin, which they inherit from our first parents, and unless they are baptized they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. If they be baptized, they receive at the same

[1] Heb. 11. 6.

time with sanctifying grace, the virtue of divine faith. Faith is therefore so necessary that one cannot be saved, even if it is without any fault of his own that he has not faith. Such a one is not disposed for eternal life, and he cannot obtain it any more than a man can see without eyes. Grown persons, *i.e.* they who have attained the use of reason, must not only have the virtue of faith, but they must also exercise certain acts of faith, in order to obtain eternal salvation. They must believe in God, and must believe that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked; according to the words of St. Paul, "He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him."[1] In order to come to God one must know the end to which he is tending; he must know that God exists, and that if he be faithful, God is to be his happiness. When a sinner wishes to obtain justification, he must be sorry for his sins out of a super-

[1] Heb. 11. 6.

natural motive, either because he has lost heaven and deserved the punishments of hell, or because he has offended God who is all-good; without the knowledge of God's existence, and that God punishes the wicked and rewards the good, he cannot have such a supernatural motive. By justification we approach God, but in order to approach Him we must first know that He exists; we must long for Him as a reward. We cannot seek God without knowing that He exists, and we shall not seek Him unless we expect a reward from Him for our fidelity. These two things must therefore be believed explicitly by every adult, so that if one is ignorant of them, he cannot be saved even if it be without his fault that he is ignorant of them. Every adult must believe all that God has revealed. He may not know all that God has revealed; but he must be so disposed that he is willing to believe all God has made known, and he must try to acquaint himself with the truths He has revealed, especially that there are three per-

sons in God, and that the second person became man and died to redeem us from sin. It is therefore an obligation for us to know the Christian doctrine, so that if we are, through our own fault, ignorant of it, we commit sin, and are not worthy of heaven. It is also of the greatest importance for us to listen to the instructions that are given us, so that we may know the truths we are to believe. God has made them known to us; if He has thought it necessary to reveal these truths to us, we should at least think it equally necessary to listen to His voice and to learn those things which He has found it necessary to teach us.

How do we know what God has revealed? After we have seen the importance of believing all that God has revealed, it is most necessary to know where we can find those truths. Christ came to redeem us from sin and to show us the way to salvation. Our Lord suffered and died; after His resurrection He ascended into heaven. In order to give a guide of faith to those who were to

come after Him, He established a Church which is to teach all people in His name. The Church of Christ, or the Catholic Church which was founded by Jesus, is the ordinary means by which men are to know the truths revealed by God. To this Church all must belong; this Church all must obey. "He that heareth you, heareth Me,"[1] said Our Lord to the apostles. Although God may make His truths known in some extraordinary way to those who have no opportunity of hearing the Church, the ordinary way for all people is to accept the teaching of the Church and to believe what she teaches because she teaches in the name of Christ. When we recite the Apostles' Creed and say, "I believe in the holy Catholic Church," we profess our belief in all that God has revealed and proposes through the Church for our belief.

We see, then, that faith is a divine virtue infused into the soul with sanctifying grace at Baptism, that it is supernatural, because

[1] Luke 10. 16.

its source is the grace of God. The motive of faith must be the truthfulness of God and His wisdom. From this it follows that we cannot pass judgment upon what we are to believe, and that we must believe all that God has revealed, for His truthfulness stands for all. We cannot accept some truths and reject others. We must believe, even though we do not understand the truths we believe, otherwise there would be no real faith, and such acceptance of the truth would be without all merit. This motive of belief, the truthfulness and the wisdom of God, gives to faith a greater firmness than even the knowledge which we have naturally can give us, because God's word is more certain than our understanding. Faith is necessary for salvation; without it we cannot approach God. Some truths we must believe explicitly, *i.e.* we must know them and believe them — such as that God exists and rewards the good and punishes the wicked. These we must know to be saved. Other truths we are bound to know under pain of mortal

sin — such as the principal doctrines of Christianity, that there are three persons in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the Son became man to save us, etc. Finally, we must believe at least implicitly, *i.e.* be ready to accept all that God has revealed and proposes through the Church for our belief.

If faith is so necessary for us that without faith it is impossible to please God, we should cultivate this virtue by frequent acts of faith, we should make ourselves acquainted with all that belongs to our religion, and hence be regular at the instructions given concerning the things we are to believe. We must pray for the gift of faith and say with the apostles, Increase our faith, O Lord![1]

[1] Luke 17. 5.

VI

ON HOPE AND CHARITY

ON HOPE

What is hope?

Hope is a divine virtue by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.

In Baptism we receive sanctifying grace and with it the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. By sanctifying grace we are justified, that is, by grace our sins are remitted, and we are interiorly sanctified, we are made children of God, and heirs of heaven. As children of God we receive a supernatural knowledge of Him by faith; as His children and heirs of heaven we receive a supernatural trust in Him, so that we hope without hesitation that He will give us the inheritance which He has promised to His children, and will give us also the necessary grace to reach heaven, as God's children, destined to be forever happy through the mercy of God. We are given a supernatural love by which we

love Him above all things. These virtues are infused into the soul together with sanctifying grace and are a free gift of God; they always accompany grace, and belong to the state of grace. We have seen what faith is and how necessary it is for salvation. Faith is the foundation of hope. Because through faith we know the power of God and His infinite mercy, we trust in His fidelity, and hence hope to receive the reward He has promised to His children, as also the means necessary to obtain the happiness God has promised us.

Like faith, hope is a *virtue*, *i.e.* something permanent put into our souls, not merely a passing, momentary act, but something that remains and inclines us to acts of hope. It is a *divine* virtue because it comes entirely from God, who puts it into our souls without our having deserved it; it has God for its object, in as much as we hope to be happy by possessing Him for all eternity; the motive, too, is something pertaining to God, namely His fidelity to His promises.

God has promised His children a great reward; they are to possess Him for all eternity. That they might tend toward Him, as their ultimate end, He has infused into their souls, together with sanctifying grace, the knowledge of Himself and the end for which they are created, and has given them the virtue of hope to reach that end, so that when they consider the greatness of God and their own littleness they may not faint by the wayside. By the virtue of hope they trust firmly that God will give them the help necessary to reach the end for which they are destined.

By the divine virtue of hope we trust *firmly* that God will give us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it. Hope is therefore a firm trust. Its motive is the fidelity of God to His promises; that He can fulfil these promises we know from His omnipotence. By one word He made heaven and earth out of nothing; He preserves them continually in being, and rules all things by His providence. He is all-

powerful; He can do all things; He can, therefore, also make us supremely happy for all eternity. He wishes to make us happy because He is all-merciful and loves us. He has shown His love and mercy toward us in innumerable ways: He has created us; when we fell into sin, He redeemed us. "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting."[1] Jesus lived for thirty-three years upon the earth, "going about doing good and healing all." For thirty-three years He instructed us in the way of salvation, and gave us an example that, as He had done we also should do.[2] Finally He offered Himself a sacrifice for the Redemption of the world. Surely we cannot doubt His love and mercy, and hence His will to make us happy. God is faithful to fulfil His promises. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (for He is faithful that hath promised)."[3]

[1] John 3. 16. [2] John 13. 15. [3] Heb. 10. 23.

Since, then, God's fidelity to His promises, founded in His omnipotence and mercy toward us, is the motive of our hope, our hope must be firm; it is infallible and absolutely certain, as far as God is concerned. There cannot be the least doubt that He wished us to be forever happy in heaven; likewise we cannot have the least doubt but that He is all-powerful and therefore able to make us happy. "Hope confoundeth not."[1] We know that "no one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded,"[2] and that "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion: he shall not be moved forever."[3] God wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of His Son; He gives every one sufficient grace, so that no one need be lost. For this Christ came into the world, and for this He suffered and died on the cross. On account of the certainty it gives us, hope is often compared to an anchor. As long as a ship is held by its anchor, it can resist the waves and the storm that may

[1] Rom. 5. 5. [2] Ecclus. 2. 11. [3] Psalm 124. 1.

be raging around it; but as soon as it breaks loose, it is given over to the mercy of the storm. So it is with hope; as long as we are firm in hope, we will fix our eyes upon the eternal reward promised us, and no matter how strong the passions may be within us, or how much the world may strive to lead us into sin, we will be able to resist them. If passion represents to us some pleasure of the senses, divine hope opposes to it the expectation of eternal happiness which we are sure to obtain if we are faithful. If the world represents something to us as valuable, hope points to God. Hope shows us the possession of God Himself and eternal happiness, the insignificance and worthlessness of the pleasures and of the goods of this world, as compared to God, so that heaven at once appears before our minds, and we are preserved from sin, because by hope we are anchored to God. By hope we are led to despise the pleasure which lasts but a moment, in order to obtain the happiness which has no end. The omnipotence, mercy,

and fidelity of God cannot be frustrated; our hope, that God will make us happy and will give us the necessary means to reach that happiness, is absolutely certain. God will certainly keep His promises. However, we must remember that He has not promised to give us heaven without our doing something on our part to deserve so great a reward. He has promised us eternal happiness if we are faithful to Him. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."[1] To obtain heaven we must cooperate with God's grace; we must accept it and use it by doing good works. God has given us free will, and He gives us His grace so that we can do that which is pleasing to Him. However, because we are not always certain to coöperate with the grace of God, it happens, despite the certainty which divine hope gives us, that we are not absolutely certain of going to heaven. Hope is certain and infallible as far as God is concerned; He will certainly give us the necessary grace,

[1] Matt. 19. 17.

and if we accept this grace, He will certainly give us heaven; but God wishes us to show our good will and fidelity toward Him, and for this reason He has promised us heaven conditionally, — provided we cooperate with His grace and keep the commandments. Now, since we cannot be certain that we shall always do all that is demanded on our part, it follows that some uncertainty remains as regards our final salvation. For this reason the Apostle, St. Paul, warns us, "With fear and trembling work out your salvation."[1] Hope does not cast out fear; we must still fear lest we be lost, not because God will be unfaithful to His promises, but because we are not certain that we shall always coöperate with the grace of God. The certainty of hope comes from God; the uncertainty and fear comes from us. God is faithful, and will do His part in our salvation; but we are weak and changeable, and may neglect the grace which God gives us.

The reformers of the sixteenth century

[1] Philip. 2. 12.

taught that we must have absolute assurance, that we are just and belong to the number of the elect, and that by this assurance we are justified. They taught that, as long as one had such assurance, he could not be lost. The Church teaches us with the Apostle not to put our trust in our own justice but in God. St. Paul said, "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall." [1] We should fear, not that God will not give us sufficient grace to be saved, but lest we be deficient in coöperating with the grace of God. We must fear our own weakness and hence watch and pray. Assurance in our own righteousness will not save us. "They that fear the Lord have hoped in the Lord: He is their helper and their protector." [2]

Hope is necessary for salvation. The virtue of hope is infused into the soul with sanctifying grace, and resides in the soul with grace. As it is impossible to be saved without grace, so it is impossible to obtain

[1] 1 Cor. 10. 12. [2] Psalm 113. 11.

salvation without the virtue of divine hope. If we have not the virtue of hope, we have not grace; since the divine virtues always accompany sanctifying grace. God promised the eternal happiness of heaven in order that, by hoping to obtain it, we might the better be moved to tend toward happiness. He wishes us, therefore, to hope for heaven and the means to obtain it. If we have not hope in God, we doubt His fidelity to His promises, and this is to insult and offend Him. To obtain grace and salvation, it is necessary to pray. We must ask God for His powerful aid; but how could we pray properly, unless we hoped to receive the gifts for which we are asking? We see, therefore, that hope is just as necessary as prayer, since prayer must be confident. A prayer, through which we do not expect to receive what we ask, is no prayer; it is an insult to God. Hope gave strength to the martyrs; had they not had Christian hope and hence trusted firmly that God would reward them, they would never have been able to bear the

sufferings they were made to undergo for the sake of their faith. Hope has been the power that sustained all true Christians, and led them to lead good and pious lives. Without hope in God and in the reward promised to them that love Him, they would not have withstood the temptations and dangers of the world. It was on account of this that they lived good Christian lives. "We should live soberly, and justly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope" was the exhortation of St. Paul to Titus.[1] Hope will also be our strength in the time of trial and temptation; then we too, like St. Paul, shall be consoled in the thought, "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[2]

[1] Titus 2. 12, 13. [2] Rom. 8. 18.

ON DIVINE CHARITY

What is charity?

Charity is a divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Charity is a *divine virtue;* it comes from God. Charity is not a natural but a *supernatural love of God.* By reason of our natural powers we can love God as our creator and our last end; but this love is infinitely below the love of God which comes through the virtue of charity. It differs as the love of a servant differs from that of a son. A servant may love his master, but he will not dare, like the child, to run up to him and embrace him; he loves him, so to speak, from a distance, whereas the child is closely united to the father and feels happy in his embrace. By our natural reason we know God to exist, and we know that He has created us. On account of this we are entirely His, we belong to Him, we are His slaves, since we owe our being to Him. By

faith we know that from slaves He has made us sons and heirs. Likewise by our natural powers we can and should love Him as our master; by the virtue of divine charity we love Him as our Father. This love of God differs from the natural love which we can have for God as much as heaven differs from earth, or as God, whose gift charity is, differs from man. Charity, like faith and hope, is infused into the soul as a free gift of God; it is undeserved. No work of a creature can merit the gift of divine charity. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[1]

By the divine virtue of charity we love God above all other objects because He is all-good in Himself and worthy of our love. Goodness and excellence move us to love. God is all-perfect, He is all-good, He is all-beautiful, He is to be our happiness for eternity. These perfections of God we know through divine faith; through faith we know the supernatural goodness of God toward us.

[1] Rom. 5. 5.

God's goodness known supernaturally is, therefore, the object of divine charity or love. Charity inclines our hearts to love God above all other things so that we are prepared rather to lose all than to be separated from God, the highest good. The love of God will make us detest sin because sin is opposed to God; it will make us do the will of God and keep His commandments. "If any man love Me he will keep My commandments," said Our Lord.

One of the most powerful means to arouse in us the love of God is to consider His mercy and goodness toward us. He has called us to be His children, and gives us continually the supernatural help of grace to make ourselves worthy sons of God. When man had sinned and was entirely helpless to rise of himself from sin, God sent His only-begotten Son to become man and redeem us from sin and death. "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son: . . . that the world may be saved by Him."[1] If He has loved us so much, should

[1] John 3. 16, 17.

we not also love Him? St. Augustine says that if we were slow to love God, we should at least now not be slow to love Him in return. Charity will move us to love God on account of His infinite perfections, and among these His mercy toward us appeals most strongly to our hearts. His love toward us leads us to gratitude, and from gratitude we easily proceed to love. This motive St. Paul proposes to us when he says, "The charity of God presseth us . . . Christ died for all, that they also who live, may not now live to themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again."[1] Jesus is God, and if we love Jesus, we love God. We can therefore be moved to divine love most effectually in considering God in Jesus, the God-Man. That men might be more effectually moved to love God, "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared: not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us."[2] How easy God has made charity, which is the first and

[1] 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. [2] Titus 3. 4, 5.

highest command, in letting us contemplate the goodness of God in the Child laid for our sake in the crib of Bethlehem; in Our Lord's going about instructing the people and healing the sick, for our sake carrying the heavy cross and dying upon it! Such love cannot but arouse our love in return.

The love of God must be above the love of all other things. God is most perfect, and the perfections of all other things are from Him. He is our last end; all other things are given us only as means to reach this end. This requires that we value God above all created things. It may happen that because we do not see God, and created things are present to us, that we seem to love them more intensely; thus we might be tempted to think that we love our parents more than God. Intensity is not required for the love of God above all things. A man who is suffering greatly from thirst may desire a drink of water with more intensity than he desires a large sum of money, and still he may not wish to give that sum of money for a drink

of water. He still values the sum of money more than a glass of water; so, also, we may love some person more intensely than God, and yet not be ready to offend God to please that person. If this is the case, we love God more than that person; we are ready to lose that person rather than lose God by offending Him by sin. Our love of God shows itself in the observance of the commandments and the avoidance of sin. When we keep the commandments and avoid sin, we prefer God and His holy will to all the pleasures of creatures; we prefer Him to possessing things which we cannot obtain without offending Him; we prefer God to unlawful pleasure; we prefer God to our own will and inclinations. This is to love God above all things.

Charity makes us love God above all things on account of His infinite goodness and perfections, but it *also makes us love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.* If we love another on account of his natural excellence and goodness, we love him by a

natural love; charity is supernatural. We must love him out of some supernatural motive; then we love him for the sake of God. If we like to associate with another because he is kind and congenial, our love is a natural one; we should love all because we love God, and God wishes them all to be His children. He calls them all to be eternally happy with Him in heaven. When we love any one we wish him good; so by the love of God we take delight in God's perfections, and wish that they be known and praised by all creatures. In like manner we should love our neighbor, *i.e.* all people. We should wish them supernatural good because this is God's will. God loves them, and by that love they become the friends of God, and, if we love God, we must also love His friends. We see from this that our charity toward our neighbor is founded on his friendship with God. In our neighbor we love the image of God whom we love above all things. A child that loves its parents will also love the picture of its par-

ents. We are children of God, and by grace the picture or image of God is in a supernatural way impressed upon the just. For the sake of the friendship which exists between God and the just we love them also. They are children of God as we are, and, therefore, they are our brothers. God is the cause of our loving them.

Do we by divine charity love only the just who are in the grace of God, and hence are His children, and not also those that are in a state of sin? No, we also love the sinners; not in as much as they are sinners, but in as much as they are men, and are called to be children of God. God wishes them to detest sin and return to Him; He wants them to be forever happy with Him in heaven. We, as God's friends, wish the same as He does; we wish them supernatural grace and happiness. They are called to be friends of God, and we love them and wish them that friendship. As sinners we do not love them, *i.e.* we hate sin, and by sin they are enemies of God; but because they are called to be

saints and friends of God, and it is the will of God that they become His friends, we unite our will with God's, and do all in our power that the will of God be done. This love of our neighbor is commanded by God. When a Pharisee asked Our Lord, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment; and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[1] St. John puts the characteristic of charity in love of the neighbor. He says that we know that if we love our neighbors, we have charity, and therefore the grace of God, since they cannot be separated. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not (the brethren) abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer hath eternal life

[1] Matt. 22. 36–39.

abiding in himself."[1] We cannot love God without loving also our neighbor because, if we love God, we are willing to do His will, and we will then also keep His commandment of love; if we love God, we will love those whom He loves, His friends. If we love God, we love His image; and this is found in every soul, endowed with intellect and free will, and still more in one washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and made by grace conformable to the image of the Son of God.[2]

The divine virtue of charity is absolutely necessary for salvation. Without grace there is no justification, and we cannot have grace and justification without the virtue of divine charity. It is so intimately connected with grace that many consider it to be the same as grace. Charity does not remain in the soul when it is deprived of sanctifying grace through mortal sin. By grace we become children of God, and we cannot be His children without loving Him. One who is without sanctifying grace is an enemy of

[1] 1 John 3. 14. [2] Rom. 8. 29.

God, and hence cannot at the same time have the love of God which would unite him to God as His friend. If we have divine charity, we will also love our neighbor, since divine charity makes us love, not only God, but also those whom He loves, and God loves the just, and His love pursues the sinner that he be converted and live.

Of all the virtues *the most excellent is charity*. Of this St. Paul assures us saying, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge: and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; and if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. . . . Now there remain faith, hope and charity: these three; but the greater of these is charity."[1] Our Lord, as we

[1] 1 Cor. 13. 1 *seqq*.

have seen, called the commandment of charity the greatest and first commandment. All other commandments are summed up in this, — if we love God, we obey Him; if we love Him, we love our neighbor, and hence will not do him any injustice; if we love God, we will love to go to Mass and to receive the sacraments; we will not injure any one in his life, possessions, or good name; if we love God, we will avoid everything that might sully the purity of our souls and make them displeasing in the eyes of God. We might say with St. Augustine, "Love God and do as you please," because if we love God we will not do anything except the will of God. Charity unites us with God and renders us His friends; its object is God in His perfections. God also is the object of the other divine virtues, but the motive is different, as by faith we know God, and by hope we tend toward Him. God is the object of these virtues, inasmuch as through Him we receive the knowledge of the highest truth, and we are made happy by the possession of

the highest good. In charity, however, we rest in God; God's perfections in themselves are its motive. We love God for His own sake and not only because He will constitute our happiness. We may love God, it is true, because He is infinitely good to us, but His goodness is a perfection which we know through His goodness toward us; we will still love Him for His perfections. It is through His mercy and goodness to us that we come to understand better His infinite goodness. Charity is the perfection of all other virtues; without charity, faith and hope may be found in the soul, but without charity they are dead and cannot bring any one to eternal life. Charity is the life of the other virtues; it directs them to their proper end. Without charity no one is really virtuous and pleasing to God; with charity he becomes a child and intimate friend of God. Faith is the root and foundation of justification, but charity is the life which makes it live; without charity the root will not bring forth the fruit of good works, and faith with-

out works is dead in itself. Charity gives value and merit to good works; without charity we can do good, but nothing that is meritorious of heaven. St. Bernard says, "The soul is the life of the body, through it the body moves and feels; charity is the life of faith because 'faith worketh by charity,' as we read in the apostle.[1] Hence, when charity grows cold, faith dies, as the body dies when the soul leaves it."[2] Charity is the perfection of faith and hope. By charity we are united to God; in the closest friendship we embrace Him whom we know by faith. By charity we obtain, even here upon earth, the possession of that supreme good which we hope for in heaven. Faith and hope may remain in one who has lost the sonship of God, but charity can be possessed only by the children of God. It is so precious that its possession marks us out as sons of God and heirs of heaven. "There is nothing sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleas-

[1] Gal. 5. 6. [2] In resurrect. serm. 2.

ing, nothing fuller, nothing better in heaven or on earth, because love is born in God and rests in God alone. . . . A great cry in the ears of God is the ardent affection of the soul which says, thou art my God, my love, my all, and I am all thine."[1]

Divine charity elevates our nature, and makes us participate in the divine nature; it elevates our natural affection, and makes it a divine affection. As long as we have only natural love we love ourselves and our neighbor for our sake, but divine charity makes us love God for His sake, and ourselves and others for the sake of God. Through grace and charity we are united in a wonderful manner with God; we live in Him; our life in the supernatural order is a life in God, so that we can say with St. Paul, "I live now, not I: but Christ liveth in me."[2] If through grace God becomes our life, through charity His love becomes our love, so that we love Him with the love with which He loves Himself. As God loves

[1] *De Im.* 3. 5. [2] Gal. 2. 20.

Himself and us on account of Himself, so, if we have divine charity, shall we love God for His own sake, and ourselves and others for the sake of God whose image man is. With this divine love all other affections must harmonize; no other love can interfere. Just as the light of the sun penetrates the air and turns all into light, so divine charity must penetrate our whole being and dominate all our actions. This is what we should strive for, that we do everything out of the love of God; that divine charity be the main-spring of all our actions. It is true this perfection is not reached here upon earth. There are many things in our lives that are imperfect and do not spring from the love of God; there are even things that are sinful and hence opposed to the love of God. These imperfections and venial sins, however, should not keep us from striving for that perfection which is demanded by reason of divine charity. We shall possess this perfection in its fulness in heaven. There all our thoughts and desires shall be absorbed by the love of God; here

upon earth we can strive for it and approach it more and more. By grace we are born for heaven; heaven is the home of the children of God. Here we have that divine life only imperfectly; the perfection is reserved for heaven, where we "shall see God as He is," and be drawn toward Him with an irresistible love, — a love that shall absorb our whole being and make us unspeakably happy.

Through the grace of justification God not only remits all the sins that we have committed and makes us His children, giving us at the same time a right to heaven, but He also infuses into our souls the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. By faith, He raises our natural power of understanding to the supernatural order, and makes us know eternal truths, which we cannot reach by the natural power of our intellect. He reveals to us the greatness and majesty of His being; by the light of our reason we can, through the contemplation of the world, come to a knowledge of the existence of God, but history shows us how the pagans, who had only

their own reason to guide them, fell into all sorts of errors concerning God, even in those matters that can be known by the light of reason. Besides these truths God has made known to us the greatness of His being, — that He is one God in three persons; that in His infinite love and mercy He sent His only Son to become man and redeem us from sin. These and many other truths we know by faith, and faith only. Hope puts before our mind a reward of which no man could have dreamed, — a reward so great that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it come into the heart of man to conceive." By natural reason we know that our soul is immortal; that it cannot die. We know, too, that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked; but how could we expect that God Himself would be "our reward exceeding great." This comes to us through the divine virtue of hope infused into our souls with sanctifying grace. Our will, instructed by the light of the intellect, can tend toward God in love, but that love is only the love of a

slave toward his master, on whom he depends in his very being. The divine virtue of charity makes us love God as our Friend; it unites us to God as our Father. It is the love of the children of God, to which natural love cannot be compared. These divine virtues are in our soul, together with sanctifying grace from which they spring; they are to make us true sons of our heavenly Father; they are to bring us to Him. In heaven, which shall be our inheritance forever, they shall be perfected. Faith shall end in vision; what we now believe we shall then see. Hope shall end in possession; love shall be perfected and fill our whole being. In this shall consist our happiness for ages without end, — the happiness of the sons of God. "Omnipotent, eternal God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and charity, and that we may merit what thou hast promised; make us love what thou commandest." [1]

[1] Oratio Dom. XIII post Pent.

VII

ON THE STATE OF GRACE

NOTHING defiled can enter heaven. Any one whose soul has on it the stain of original sin or of any actual sin, is excluded from the happiness of heaven. Before such a one can enter heaven he must be justified. This justification begins with the actual grace of God, illumining the understanding and moving the will. But the grace of God will not do all. Man, too, must coöperate; he, too, must do something. With the grace of God he must believe, hope, begin to love God, and repent of his sins. Thus prepared he must receive the sacrament of Baptism or, if he be already baptized, the sacrament of Penance. By these sacraments he receives sanctifying grace which justifies him.

By Baptism man is cleansed from original sin as well as from any other sin that he may have committed before Baptism. Besides the remission of sin he also receives the remission of all punishments due to sin, so that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,"[1] nothing that is displeasing to God, nothing that would prevent his entering into the kingdom of heaven immediately, should he die at that time. This is not all; besides the cleansing from sin, Baptism does also something positive. By Baptism man is born anew; he is made a child of God, an heir of heaven, a member of His holy Church. How is this all brought about? By sanctifying grace. Through Baptism the Holy Ghost pours into the soul sanctifying grace together with the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Sanctifying grace works an entire renovation in the souls of those that are baptized. By it the sinner becomes just; his sins are not merely covered over, but entirely blotted out and

[1] Rom. 8. 1.

forgiven, so that nothing of the former state remains that would demand the punishment of God. Since there is in Baptism a new birth, and we are born of God, we become sons of God, and "if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."[1]

If any one commits a mortal sin after Baptism, he loses the grace of God and with that all supernatural justification; he ceases to be an object of pleasure in the sight of God, and is no longer His child; he loses his right to the inheritance of heaven. If he should die in this state, he would be lost forever. To escape so terrible a condition he must do penance and confess his sins. Through the sacrament of Penance, he can regain the state of grace lost by sin. Through the sacrament of Penance he can once more become a child of God and have restored to him the right to his inheritance. To him God will say, This my son was dead, behold he liveth; he was lost, and behold he is found.[2]

[1] Rom. 8. 17. [2] Luke 15. 32.

Sanctifying grace is not, like actual grace, something given only for a short time and then passing away; no, it remains in the soul; it inheres in it; it is something permanent. *Sanctifying grace puts the soul in a state of freedom from sin, and gives supernatural holiness and justice.* For this reason we say of one who has obtained sanctifying grace, that he is in a state of grace, or that he has sanctifying grace; that it dwells in his soul, or that his soul is adorned with sanctifying grace. God cannot give us a greater gift than sanctifying grace. Hence the Apostle, St. Paul, admonishes us to give thanks. "Giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature;"[1] that is, before any creature was made, the Son of God

[1] Col. i. 12–15.

was. Through the sacraments we receive the fruits of the Redemption, that is, we receive the remission of our sins, and of the punishment due to sin; we are born anew, and so become like to Jesus, and are made worthy of the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. Grace, as St. Thomas says, is the beginning of glory, just as glory is the completion of grace. The perfect union of God with the creature and the happiness of heaven is a consequence of grace, which will surely follow, if it is not impeded by mortal sin. The smallest degree of sanctifying grace is the beginning of this union with God. Grace is the pledge of eternal life and the seed from which it springs. As man is created to the image and likeness of God, so by his second birth he is conformed to the image of His Son and made a child of God.

As long as we possess sanctifying grace we carry in our hearts a priceless treasure; grace is worth as much as God Himself, since it is through grace that we come into the possession of God. Through grace we

are made one spirit with God, as St. Paul says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit."[1] We adhere to God, when we are united to Him by grace. Sanctifying grace is that treasure of which the gospel speaks, — the treasure hidden in a field, for which we give all, that we might acquire the field. It is the greatest wealth; we should ever strive for it because it is a treasure which cannot be stolen nor destroyed by moths. No matter how poor a man may be in this world's goods, if he possess sanctifying grace, he is immeasurably wealthy; and if a man possess all the goods of the world and is without sanctifying grace, he is poor, indeed, and deserves our pity. "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"[2] The greatest loss that any soul can suffer is the loss of sanctifying grace, which is the very life of the soul.

This divine treasure of grace makes us truly happy and contented. We see so

[1] 1 Cor. 6. 17. [2] Matt. 16. 26.

many people who possess all they can reasonably desire, and still are not happy. Not so he who possesses the grace of God. He has internal peace, — the peace of the heart; nothing can disturb him because he knows that God loves him, and he desires no more. This peace and happiness is a foretaste of the happiness of heaven which consists in seeing and possessing God. It is true the saints in heaven are still happier because their union with God is more intimate and they are in no danger of losing God for all eternity. We, on the contrary, are always in danger of losing sanctifying grace, for "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."[1] We are on the way to our eternal home, and, as long as we have not yet arrived there, "The evil spirits beset our way like robbers"[2] and try to deprive us of the valuable treasure which we have. We must, therefore, take the advice of the Apostle, "See, therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise."[3]

[1] 2 Cor. 4. 7. [2] St. Greg. *Hom.* 11. [3] Eph. 5. 15.

No one can take the treasure of sanctifying grace from us against our will; we can lose it only if we give it up of our own accord. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . . for I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."[1] If there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God, then there is nothing that can take away from us sanctifying grace, because it is impossible to have the grace of God without loving Him.

Through grace we are united with God as long as we do not lose this precious gift through sin. We are, however, not preserved from temptation on account of grace. There still remains in us the effect of

[1] Rom. 8. 35–39.

original sin; evil inclinations, which are not sinful in themselves, but which entice us to sin. Of these not even the holiest persons are free. St. Paul tells us that even when he had been rapt to the third heaven, where he heard words which no man could repeat, he relates of himself, "Lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, for which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; and He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity."[1] Even St. Paul, who was a great saint and certainly had the grace of God, was not free from temptations. So long as we resist temptations, they cannot rob us of sanctifying grace; on the contrary they will increase our merits and will make the state of grace more firm in us on account of our fidelity to it. Even if through human infirmity we should fall into venial sins, we will not lose the state

[1] 2 Cor. 12. 7–9.

of sanctifying grace. Venial sin does not rob us of sanctifying grace; mortal sin alone can do this.

Can we know whether we are in the state of grace? It is certain that we receive sanctifying grace in Baptism, and grace remains in the soul as long as it is not expelled by mortal sin. If any one knows that he has committed no mortal sin after Baptism, then he has reason to hope that he is in the state of grace. Likewise one who has sinned after Baptism, but has repented and made a good confession, can hope that he is in the state of grace. The sacraments of Baptism and Penance give sanctifying grace infallibly, provided we receive them worthily and do all that is required on our part. Still, no one can be absolutely certain that he has had the right contrition for his sins, and that he has confessed them as he should. We cannot always be certain whether the sins we have committed were mortal or only venial sins. On this account, namely because we cannot be absolutely certain that we have done all that

was required, and not on account of any defect on the part of the sacraments, we can never be certain of possessing sanctifying grace. "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred."[1] And the Apostle says, "For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me, is the Lord."[2] It was on this account that St. Paul found it necessary to practise mortification in order to overcome the temptations to sin and persevere in grace. "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away."[3] Although we can have no absolute certainty that we are in the state of grace, still we must have confidence in the mercy and love of God and hope in the merits of Jesus Christ. This hope which we have, that we are in the state of grace, and that we shall finally through the mercy of God be brought to life everlasting, must not be without distrust in ourselves and fear of sin.

[1] Eccl. 9. 1. [2] 1 Cor. 4. 4. [3] 1 Cor. 9. 27.

The Church in the Council of Trent teaches that no one without a special revelation, can know with the certainty of faith, that he is in the state of grace and much less that he shall persevere in it until death.[1]

There are some signs by which we may form some judgment whether we are in the state of grace or not; these are the fruits of grace, namely good works. Just as we can know the nature of a tree from its fruits, so we can also know the presence of grace from its fruits. Our Lord said, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."[2] Through sanctifying grace man becomes a child of God; he is freed from sin; he becomes just and holy before God; he will therefore also do what is just and holy; he will show himself a child of God in his works. His works will be such as are pleasing to God, and meritorious of heaven. According to false teaching of the so-called Reformers of the sixteenth century, man can do nothing worthy of heaven, even when he is justified, because according to

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. 6, c. 9. [2] Matt. 7. 17.

them, justification is not a renewal and an inner sanctification but only a covering over of sin by the merits of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church teaches, however, that by the reception of sanctifying grace the sins are entirely blotted out, they are washed away by Baptism, and the soul receives a new life. It is interiorly sanctified. Man is born again; he becomes a child of God.

One who is justified by grace has a new *supernatural life*, and he who lives by this life, lives in God; all that lives tends to action; hence grace, too, will show itself by acts, that is, by good works. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[1] If we have grace, then we have the love of God, because by grace our souls are united to God. Love will manifest itself: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in

[1] Rom. 5. 5.

iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed."[1] Charity or the love of God which is always joined to sanctifying grace shows itself by good works.

The fruits of good works of the early Christians at Jerusalem we find recorded in Holy Scripture. They persevered in the teaching of the apostles and the breaking of bread and in prayer. They remained in the faith, were obedient to the commands of the apostles, received frequently the Holy Eucharist, and were constant in prayer; this was the effect of sanctifying grace. Further, we read of the early Christians that they sold their goods and gave them to the poor, they were filled with the love of their neighbor; and true love of one's neighbor is a sign of the love of God. As it was in those days, so is it to-day; they that have in their hearts

[1] 1 Cor. 13. 4–8.

the love of God, and hence are in the state of grace, obey the commandments of God and of the Church; they are charitable and kind; they lead good lives, are pure, honest, and pious. The works of such persons are meritorious.

We call those works meritorious or salutary which deserve a reward from God, and that, a supernatural reward. This reward consists in the increase of sanctifying grace and eternal salvation. It is true, sanctifying grace is a free gift of God, and so are the faculties of mind and body gifts of God; still, because we have free will, and hence can accept or reject the grace offered us, God rewards us most generously when we accept it and coöperate with it. St. Gregory the Great says, "Because the will follows the preventing grace of God, that which was a gift becomes meritorious."[1] And the Council of Trent teaches, "They who do good and persevere to the end, receive eternal life, not only as a grace promised to the sons of God

[1] Hom. 9 *in Ezech.*

through Jesus Christ, but as a reward to be faithfully given on account of the promise of God and the merits of their works."[1] The reward we receive for our good works is at the same time an act of justice and an act of mercy on the part of God. It is an act of justice because God has promised this reward, and we, by fulfilling the conditions of His promise, have deserved it; it is an act of mercy because we could fulfil the conditions of that promise only through the help of the grace which Jesus merited for us by His suffering and death. God's mercy toward us has been so great that He rewards His own gifts in us as our merits.

Will the grace of God remain always in us? There is nothing that can deprive us of sanctifying grace except mortal sin. Mortal sin is a grievous offence against the law of God. To sin mortally, it is necessary that there should be question of some grievous matter; that we act with

[1] Sess. 6. c. 16.

sufficient reflection and with full consent of the will. One who commits a sin of that kind drives from his soul sanctifying grace. Supernatural life is lost, and that soul becomes dead in the eyes of God. With the loss of sanctifying grace is lost also the love and friendship of God; God is driven from the soul. God will not live in a heart which is subject to sin; sin builds up a wall of separation between the soul and God. By sin, not only the friendship of God is lost, but the sinner becomes an enemy of God. How terrible to have for an enemy, God who is all-powerful, who can cast us body and soul into the fire of hell! The sinner casts aside that treasure which Jesus obtained for him at the expense of countless sufferings and death, — a treasure which cannot be compared with all the goods of the world because it insures us of the possession of God Himself. With the loss of sanctifying grace, are lost all merits of the good works performed, no matter how great they may have been. Those

merits were founded in grace, and with the foundation, the whole structure is destroyed. With the loss of sanctifying grace is lost also the happiness and peace of the children of God. No one can be really happy who has separated himself from God, the source of all true happiness. He is separated from Christ who gives a peace, such as the world cannot give. With grace is lost the sonship of God and the right to heaven. The sinner makes himself worthy of eternal hell-fire; he has no longer any right to the inheritance of the children of God; by an act of his own free will, he throws away all that God in His mercy gave him. By sin he has said to God that he wants nothing in common with Him, that he prefers to please himself in this life rather than to obey God. From this we see that there is no evil so great as the evil of mortal sin.

THE STATE OF PRIVATION OF SANCTIFYING GRACE

When a man is in the state of sin all his good works are without merit for heaven. The Holy Scriptures in various places compare man to a tree; the good tree brings forth good fruit, and the bad tree brings forth evil fruit. The works of the good are effects of sanctifying grace; their works are meritorious for heaven. This does not mean, however, that everything one does whilst in the state of grace is good and merits heaven; even a man in the state of grace can commit sin, and hence do evil. Such a man can commit mortal sin, and thereby lose the grace which is in him; yes, he can do evil, even without losing the state of grace when he commits venial sins. There are trees growing wild, and there are some that have been improved. These latter have had a branch of a better quality grafted upon them; they bring forth better fruit. When he receives sanctifying

grace, man resembles one of these grafted trees; he can bring forth better fruit than he could have done naturally. This is not the case with the man in sin; he cannot bring forth any fruit worthy of heaven; he remains, so to speak, a wild tree. A man who is not baptized, or who has fallen into mortal sin, may perform works which are naturally good, but he can do nothing to merit a supernatural reward. From this we can see that not all that such a one does is sinful, as the heretics of the sixteenth century taught. Their idea was that through the sin of our first parents human nature had been entirely corrupted, so that it was unable to do anything but what is sinful. According to the teaching of our Holy Church, man has lost sanctifying grace through the fall of Adam, and so has become incapable of working his salvation. In consequence of the loss of grace, through original sin, man can do nothing to gain heaven, but his natural faculties of intellect and free will have not been destroyed; he

can still will and do the good which he understands; he can do that which is in conformity with the law of nature, and therefore not sinful.

There are works which are bad and sinful of themselves, such as blasphemy, murder, adultery, etc. Every one that does these things, whether he be baptized or not, is guilty of sin; the one who is baptized loses by these sins the state of sanctifying grace, and makes himself worthy of eternal punishment; the unbaptized also commits grievous sin, and makes himself punishable with eternal death. Other works are in themselves indifferent, that is, they are neither good nor bad, as eating, drinking, walking, etc. These can become good or bad, according to the circumstances and the intention with which we perform them. If we take a walk in order to get new strength and so be better able to do our work, then such a walk is good; but if we take a walk in order to avoid going to Mass on Sunday, then the walk is bad and sinful.

Finally, there are works which are good in themselves; these works are good, provided they are performed in the proper circumstances and with the right intention. Such works are prayer, honoring one's parents. It is clear that even one who is not baptized can honor his father and mother, as can also one who is in the state of mortal sin; yet such acts are not sinful. They are, however, worthless for heaven because the source of eternal life is not in such a one. Such works are naturally good; they are the fruit of his natural faculties of understanding and free will. These works are not above nature; they belong to this world, and not to heaven. Had he who performed these works been in the state of grace, his natural powers would have been raised to the supernatural order, he would have had in him the principle of eternal life, and his works would have been of that higher kind which leads to heaven. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels,

and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; and if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing; and if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body up to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."[1] No words could be more clear or stronger than these of St. Paul. Without charity, that is, without sanctifying grace, all works are useless for eternal salvation, even such as giving all we possess to feed the poor, giving our body to be burned, — faith itself, no matter if it be strong enough to work miracles, cannot save us if we are in a state of sin. We must then be united by grace to God if we wish to earn the eternal reward of heaven. For this reason Our Lord tells us that He is the vine and we are the branches, because no branch can

[1] 1 Cor. 13. 1–3.

bring forth fruit when it is separated from the vine. A branch which is cut off from the vine soon withers and dies; it cannot bear good fruit. If we wish to bear good fruit, we must be united by grace to Christ; without Him we can do nothing. We must receive from Him the life of grace, just as the branch receives life and sap from the vine. One who is not baptized or who has lost the state of grace by mortal sin is spiritually dead; he is dead to heaven, and can do nothing to gain it. Of him the words of the Apocalypse are true, "I know thy works, that thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead."[1] A man who is not baptized, therefore not justified, or one who has committed a mortal sin, is deprived of sanctifying grace, and consequently is not a child of God, has no right to heaven, and can do nothing to merit it. The condition of such a one is, indeed, deplorable.

Although the good works of one in the

[1] Apoc. 3. 1.

state of sin are not meritorious for heaven, yet we must not think that they are entirely useless, so that it would be of no benefit whatever for him to do good. These good works performed in the state of sin, though they do not give one a right to heaven, may still lead him there by disposing him for the *grace of repentance.* "Redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor; perhaps He will forgive thy offences."[1] This was the advice of Daniel to the king Nabuchodonosor. Such good works, although they do not merit grace, are still apt to move God to take pity on the sinner and give him the grace of conversion. These naturally good works may also *ward off the temporal punishments* due to the sins we have committed. Of this we have an example in the Ninevites, who, when they heard the prediction that their city was soon to be destroyed, fasted and clothed themselves in sackcloth and ashes. This averted the punishment, and

[1] Dan. 4. 24.

their city was spared. Good works, performed when not in the state of grace, are useless for our salvation, inasmuch as we cannot merit heaven without being friends and children of God, which we are only by sanctifying grace; but they are not entirely useless, because they may be for us the reason of conversion, or may avert punishment due to sin. We read in the Acts of the Apostles of a certain centurion, Cornelius, "A religious man, and fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people and always praying to God."[1] He was still a heathen and therefore not in the state of sanctifying grace, for this comes only through Baptism. Although not baptized, and hence not able to merit heaven, he received the grace of conversion on account of the good work which he performed.

On account of the sin of our first parents, we are all born deprived of sanctifying grace; we have no right to heaven, and are subject to sin. Likewise, if we commit a

[1] Acts 10. 2.

mortal sin after Baptism, we lose again the state of grace. As long as the guilt of sin remains in the soul we can do nothing for heaven, and if one should be so unfortunate as to die in that state, he would be lost forever. How terrible is the condition of sin! And yet sinners, as a rule, are so blinded to their dangerous condition that they see no danger in it. They are bound, as it were, with iron chains which they are unable to break. On this account the conversion of a sinner is a greater miracle than the raising of a dead man to life. It is a miracle of grace.

Although conversion is so great a gift that it cannot be merited, the sinner may and should pray for it. Our Lord said, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you."[1] This much the sinner can do; he has always sufficient grace to pray. If he pray for the grace of conversion, he may hope to receive it, for Our Lord continues

[1] Matt. 7. 7.

and says, "Every one that asketh receiveth."[1] Prayer like other good works is not in vain, even in those that are not in the state of grace. God Himself through His prophets repeatedly exhorted the Israelites to prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and other good works, in order that they might receive pardon for their transgressions. Of alms Our Lord Himself said that they lead to the remission of sin. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."[2]

Every one who is in the state of sin must do all in his power to escape the terrible danger of being lost forever. This is demanded by the love we should have for ourselves, as a Christian must love his own soul, and must try to save it. If we have committed a grievous sin, we must immediately make an act of contrition, and confess our fault to the priest, and from him seek absolution in the sacrament of Penance. In this way we can regain the state of grace, after we have had the mis-

[1] Matt. 7. 8. [2] Matt. 5. 7.

fortune of losing it by mortal sin. No one need remain in the state of sin for a moment; if confession is not immediately possible, we can make an act of perfect contrition (that is, an act of sorrow for our sins, because by them we have offended God who is all-good and most worthy of our love), together with the firm resolution of sinning no more and of confessing our sins as soon as possible. Why should we remain for hours, or even days and weeks, in the state of sin, and so be continually exposed to the danger of being suddenly cast into hell for eternity?

There is nothing worse than living in a state of sin; it is greater than any other evil. Mortal sin separates us from God, the source of all good and all real happiness; it robs us of all the good that we have done; takes away all the merit of whatever good we may do whilst in this state; and, finally, if persevered in, it banishes the sinner into everlasting hell-fire. On account of this the good Christian daily recites the

act of contrition for his sins, and promises that he will die rather than offend God again by grievous sin. The saints understood the great difference between the state of grace and the state of sin, when they willingly suffered death rather than offend God. By denying their faith they might have saved their lives, and received great earthly rewards and honors, but that would have been a grievous offence against God, and they remembered the words of their divine Master, "He that loveth his life (*i.e.* the life of the body) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal."[1] We will, therefore, never commit a mortal sin, even if it were to save a person's life. This would be to pay too dear a price for it. Yet how many there are who sell their souls for even less! How many treasures they could save up in heaven, during the time that they are in mortal sin! Now this precious time, in which they ought to work for heaven, is

[1] John 12. 25.

lost because they are in a state of sin and can do nothing for the salvation of their souls.

When we compare these two states, the state of sin and the state of grace, what a contrast they are to each other! How much better is it to watch over the precious treasure of sanctifying grace, to be a child of God and an heir of heaven, to lay up treasures in heaven for our eternal glory, than to run after the passing pleasures of this world, and to be all this time, as it were, hanging over the abyss of hell, into which the sinner might fall at any moment! Let us therefore be faithful to grace, until grace be changed into glory, when God Himself will say to us, "I am thy reward exceeding great."[1]

[1] Gen. 15. 1.

VIII

ON GOOD WORKS

THE state of grace consists in freedom from mortal sin, the possession of interior sanctity through grace and its companions, faith, hope, and charity. By grace our souls become beautiful and pleasing in the sight of God; with it are given us the divine virtues that make us true sons of God. These virtues are given us to know God, hope in Him, and love Him. The effect of the virtues are, therefore, good works. The virtues of faith, hope, and charity may be compared to the talents which the lord gave to his servants, and with which they were to work, and on the return of the master, render an account of their work. "To one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to

his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey."[1] The one who had received five talents used them and gained five more; likewise the one who had received two, put them to good account and gained two more; but the one who received only one talent buried it, and gained nothing for his master. When the master returned he held a reckoning with his servants, and to each of the two faithful servants he said, "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord."[2] To the third one, however, he said, "Wicked and slothful servant, . . . take ye away therefore the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten talents; for to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away."[3] What is the meaning of this parable? The master is our divine Lord, Jesus Christ, who after our

[1] Matt. 25. 15. [2] *Ibid.* 25. 21. [3] *Ibid.* 25. 26, 27.

Redemption returned into heaven. In His Church, He left the treasures of His grace which are given to us through Baptism and the other sacraments. These treasures He merited for us by His Passion and death, and distributes to us through the sacraments. We are the servants who are to use them, and who must give an account of the manner in which we have corresponded with grace. Some men receive more grace than others, but all receive at least one talent; all receive sufficient grace to gain more and work their salvation. Each must use the grace given him, and must by using it obtain some gain; all must bring to the Master the fruit of good works. They who coöperate faithfully with the grace of God, and bring to Him the fruit of good works, shall be rewarded. This reward consists in the good pleasure of the Lord and in the joys of heaven. "Well done" indicates the pleasure that the Lord has in His faithful servants; "Enter thou into the joys of thy lord" refers to the happiness of heaven

which is indeed the joy of the Lord, since its principal happiness consists in the possession of God Himself. From this parable we see clearly that good works are necessary. "A good tree will bring forth good fruit." "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire."[1]

Good works are necessary to retain and increase sanctifying grace. Grace is the talent which the Lord has given to us of His own free will. We did not earn nor merit it. We must watch over, and so preserve and increase it, otherwise we shall incur God's displeasure and be treated as unfaithful and slothful servants. When we received this talent in Baptism, we received at the same time the obligation of using it and bringing forth good works. We renounced Satan and his works, and promised to lead good and holy lives. Sanctifying grace can be compared to a light: as a light is fed by oil, so sanctifying grace is fed

[1] Matt. 3. 10.

and nourished by good works. We must not hide this light under a bushel, but we must let it shine so that when others see our good works, they may praise the Father who is in heaven. "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[1] St. Paul admonishes the Christians, "Do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations; that you may be blameless and sincere children of God, without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."[2] Our good works should be as a light to the world, that through them men may be attracted to God. By our good example we shall teach the world to serve God.

We must perform good works because we are Christians. A Christian is one who by sanctifying grace is united to Christ; one who has become, in a manner, a part of Christ. Christ lives and "dieth now no more."[3]

[1] Matt. 5. 16. [2] Philip. 2. 14, 15. [3] Rom. 6. 9.

If, then, we are members of His body, we too must live; and we live by charity which shows itself in works. "Faith without works is dead."[1] To be united to Christ demands a living faith, — one that is perfected in charity and good works. A Christian is a disciple or a follower of Christ; he must, therefore, listen to the words of his Master and obey them. Christ repeatedly commanded us to pray, to keep the commandments of God, to love our neighbor and even our enemies. By word and deed He taught us to do good works. He went about doing good, and healing the sick. "I have given you an example that as I have done to you, so you do also."[2] "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart."[3] "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me."[4] From this and from the example of the apostles and of the saints, we can see that true Christian life consists in doing good works, according to the teaching and ex-

[1] James 2. 20. [2] John 13. 15. [3] Matt. 11. 29. [4] Luke 9. 23.

ample of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. They who no longer go to Mass, who do not wish to fast and deny themselves, who do not keep the commandments, are not living Christian lives, — they are Christians only in name. Sanctifying grace is fed on good works; where good works are wanting, there sanctifying grace will not remain long. A man who does not perform good works is like a tree without fruit; he is worthless. Without good works we cannot remain in the state of grace, but if we perform good works, we will continually grow in grace. "He that is just let him be justified still, and he that is holy let him be sanctified still."[1]

Without good works we cannot enter heaven. It is true, children that are baptized and die before they reach the use of reason, go straight to heaven; they are children of God, and heaven is their inheritance. Likewise grown persons that die immediately after Baptism, obtain heaven without

[1] Apoc. 22. 11.

works on their part; but these are exceptions. They go to heaven without having performed good works because they have not had time to perform such works. The ordinary Christian, however, who has reached the use of reason must perform good works, and so merit the joys of heaven. Heaven is a reward, and a reward is given for good deeds. "But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal."[1] These treasures that we are to lay up in heaven, are our good works. We have compared good works to oil which feeds the light of sanctifying grace. If we allow the oil to run out, we shall be like the foolish virgins of whom Our Lord speaks in the gospel. They went to meet the bridegroom, but neglected to keep oil in their lamps. When He came they were not prepared, and the bridegroom said to them, "I know you not," and the door of heaven was closed before

[1] Matt. 6. 20.

them. If we come before Him without the oil of good works, He will tell us also that He does not know us as His own; if we have no good works to show, He will have nothing to do with us. "Many are called but few chosen,"[1] and St. Peter tells us to make sure our vocation and election by good works.[2] All are called to the kingdom of heaven, but only they who make sure their election by good works, are chosen. It is by good works that we obtain the happiness that God has destined for us from eternity.

A gardener plants a tree; he waters it, and cares for it, in the hope that it will bring forth good fruit; if the tree disappoints the hopes of the gardener, what does he do? Our Lord gives us the answer: "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none.

[1] Matt. 20. 16. [2] 2 Peter 1. 10.

Cut it down therefore: why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it; and if happily it bear fruit; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."[1] God does not punish immediately, but gives time for repentance; He still cares for him of whom He expects good works; but if after repeated gifts of grace, he still shows no good works, He will cut such a one down like the tree in the gospel. "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire." A tree is to bear fruit, and if it does not bear fruit, it is good only to serve as wood for the fire. Before Baptism we were like a tree growing wild; by Baptism we were transplanted into the vineyard of Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church. Here we are to bring forth the fruit of good works. If we do not do this, God may have patience with us for a long time, but finally we shall be cut down instead of being transplanted into the garden

[1] Luke 13. 6–9.

of paradise, as God had intended that we should be.

Heaven is, indeed, a gift which we receive through the mercy of God; it is a gift which Jesus obtained for us by His Passion and death, but we, too, are to earn it in and with Jesus by good works. Jesus has given us grace and so made it possible for us to earn heaven; if we do not work to earn heaven, God will treat us as He treated the unfaithful servant in the gospel, — He will cast us out into exterior darkness, where there is "howling and gnashing of teeth." Let us consider this well now before it is too late; when one has lived badly and has wasted his time in life, and death has come, then it is too late to feel sorry for one's sins. No weeping or regretting will free one from hell; hell does not give up its victims; hell is eternal. It is now that we must be sorry for sin and improve our ways; after death sorrow comes too late. What we have sowed in life, that shall we reap in death. Here is the place for work; hereafter, the place for reward or

punishment. "Let us work while there is day, for the night shall come when no man can work." Often we hear people say, "I am not a thief, I am not a murderer, I have not committed any great crimes, I need have no fear of the judgment." Yet, if we remember, it was not because the fig-tree had done anything evil that it was to be cut down; it was because it had not brought forth good fruits; because it bore no fruit was the reason it was to be cut down and thrown into the fire. In the same way the unfaithful servant was not reprimanded because he had been dishonest, or had stolen his master's money; no, it was because he had not used it and gained more with it; this was the reason he was called unfaithful. So it is with the Christian; *it is insufficient not to do any wrong, we must also do good.* Grace is given us, both to avoid sin and to do good. We must make use of grace for both purposes. Sloth is one of the capital sins; not to do good is to be lazy and slothful. Why was Dives buried in hell? We do not read that

he committed great crimes, but he was a man of the world; he used his wealth for good living and neglected to help the poor. He did not perform any works of charity; he saw Lazarus daily, lying before his house, and neglected to help him; this was the reason of his condemnation. He missed the purpose of his existence; he did not use the goods of this world rightly, and he was cut out of the garden of God, and cast into the fire to burn. Had he performed even some slight work of mercy, he might have been saved, or, at least, his pains should have been greatly diminished. Good works are therefore necessary that we may enter the kingdom of heaven.

The reward of heaven for good works is so great that we cannot form any idea of it. St. Paul compares life to a race, and the reward of heaven to the crown that is given to the victor. We can imagine the joy and the satisfaction of one who after long months of training has come out victorious in a contest, and receives the applause of the crowd.

His heart swells with joy and pride; he forgets entirely the fatigue and labor of the preparation now that they are crowned with success. In like manner, but in a much higher degree, shall we feel happy when our human labors are crowned in heaven; then, indeed, shall we feel the truth of the words of St. Paul, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us."[1] That glory, of which the apostles only saw a glimpse on Mt. Thabor, which made St. Peter wish to remain there forever, and exclaim, "Lord, it is good for us to be here,"[2] exceeds all that man has ever seen or heard or even been able to think. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."[3] St. Stephen, whilst he was being stoned to death, saw the heavens open and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. The scene filled him with such happiness that he did not feel the stones falling upon him.

[1] Rom. 8. 18. [2] Matt. 17. 4. [3] 1 Cor. 2. 9.

Many of the martyrs walked upon red-hot coals, and the thought of the joys of heaven made them seem to them to be sweet-smelling roses. St. Paul was thrice rapt up into heaven; whether in the body or out of the body he knew not,[1] but what he saw there he could never find words to express. We are often delighted with a beautiful scene,—for instance, the sun rising on a beautiful spring day. After the dreary winter spring seems wonderfully lovely to us, as it buds forth the first flowers, and the birds that had deserted us during the winter season are again heard in the fields; then we often experience a feeling that we would wish it always to be spring. The earth in all her beauty is, after all, only the work of the hand of God. "He commanded and they were created."[2] How beautiful must be God who made all these things of beauty! How we love to be in the company of those whom we love, our parents, brothers, and sisters, our companions at school, our play-

[1] 2 Cor. 12. [2] Psalm 32. 9.

mates; yet what are they all compared to God who is most kind and loving? Heaven which we are to merit by good works, the fruit of sanctifying grace, consists in seeing and possessing God for all eternity. There will be no tears, no sorrow, no separation, no fear, no suffering of any kind, but only happiness and joy and glory forever and ever. "I have said, you are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High."[1] And this glory and happiness we can earn through prayer, fasting, giving of alms, in a word, through good works!

How is it that good works have so great a value, that by them we can merit the glory of heaven and the possession of God Himself? The value does not come from us. Of ourselves we can do nothing; the value comes from the grace of God. "I am the vine, you the branches. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."[2] It is only they who are united to Jesus by sanctifying grace who bear much fruit; they

[1] Psalm 81. 6. [2] John 15. 5.

who are not branches of Him, the vine, can do nothing to merit heaven; they do not receive life from Him, and are dead. It is through grace that we are united to Christ, as the branch is united to the vine; through grace we become united to Jesus, as the members are united to the body. Through grace we are living branches and living members of Christ. From Him life flows into us, as the life-giving sap flows from the vine into the branches. Jesus is true God and His works have for this reason an infinite value. Since then by grace we partake of His life and act by the strength that comes from His grace, our works, too, become most precious, so that by them we may merit the eternal happiness of heaven. When we are in the state of grace, we act as the members of Jesus Christ, and this gives value to our works, which of themselves would have no power to merit a reward in the supernatural order. From this we see that our principal concern in this life is to remain united with Jesus by sanctifying

grace, and hence to avoid everything that might break this bond which unites us to Him. Christ Himself wishes nothing more earnestly than that we remain in His grace. He prayed before His Passion and death: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one as We also are. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. . . . Sanctify them in truth. . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[1] Not our strength but the grace of God, which we have and by which we are united to God, gives value to our works. "All things are yours" because "You are Christ's."[2] It is from Christ that we receive the grace which makes us able to do good and salutary works. "For you know the grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, that being

[1] John 17. 11–21. [2] 1 Cor. 3. 22.

rich, He became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich."[1] "God is able to make all grace abound in you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."[2] Through Christ we have become rich in grace, and if we remain in His grace, we shall be rich in good works, and so abound in merits for heaven. *The first requisite for the performance of good works, meritorious of heaven, is, therefore, to be in the state of grace.*

Besides being in the state of grace, we must perform our good works with a *good intention.* We have seen that the value of our good works comes from the merits of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and hence that we must be united with Him through sanctifying grace. However, even if we are in the state of grace, we may perform works, good in themselves, without any spiritual benefit to ourselves, if we do not perform them with the right intention. It is the intention

[1] 2 Cor. 8. 9. [2] 2 Cor. 9. 8.

which God looks upon principally in our good work. It is true He also takes into account the difficulty of the work, the pains we have taken in performing it, the sacrifices we have made, and so forth; but without a good intention all these things are of no value for heaven. The Pharisees were ordinarily good people: they fasted strictly, gave alms, and recited long prayers, but they had not the right intention; they did these things that they might be seen and praised by men. Did they receive no reward for the good they did? Yes, they received the reward they worked for, — the praises of men; but as regards any further reward in heaven Our Lord answers, "Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward."[1] They received what they labored for, and hence had nothing more to expect. God will reward in eternity, only those that work for Him; they that work for themselves or for the world shall receive no reward in heaven. They that work for Him are those who

[1] Matt. 6. 2.

are in the state of grace, and perform good works, with the intention of pleasing God and of earning heaven.

If a person performs a good work, be it ever so great, as, for instance, building a church, and he only does this to be honored by men as a great benefactor, he will receive no reward in heaven for it, because he did not work for God but for his own reputation. If, however, in building a church, his principal intention is good, — he wants to build it for the glory of God and to help save souls, — yet, with this good intention, he also wants to receive praise and recognition from men for the good he has done, he will receive his reward in heaven, but it will not be as great as it would have been had his intention been altogether pure and not mixed with lower motives. That absolute purity of intention, where we seek nothing but the glory of God, is very rare among men. We are human, and human motives will often creep into our best actions. What we must strive for is to keep our intentions as pure as

possible, to repress self-love in our actions as much as we can. The less of the love of self there is in our actions, the purer our intention, the more meritorious shall be our good works. We see from this that a bad intention may ruin the best work; an imperfect intention may destroy a great part of the good in a work done for God; but a good intention may also give great value to a work in itself insignificant. This we see in the example of the widow of whom Our Lord speaks in the gospel. She gave only a very small piece of money, yet, because she was poor and gave the little she had out of the love of God, Our Lord said that she had given more than all the others.

Prayer, fasting, giving of alms, are in themselves good works, but a bad intention can make them bad, a good intention can make them better. Eating, drinking, walking, and the like, are in themselves neither good nor bad, but the intention can make them so. If we have no other intention but to satisfy our hunger or to walk for our health, we do

not merit a supernatural reward; but if we receive food and drink with a grateful heart, say grace before and after meals, walk and take exercise because God wants us to take care of our health that we may be better able to serve Him, then eating, drinking, walking, etc., become meritorious of heaven because these things are done for the glory of God. "Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God."[1] Things indifferent in themselves, *i.e.* neither good nor bad, become good by a good intention. We may thus serve God well even in doing our daily actions. The story is told of St. Aloysius that whilst playing some game with his companions, one of them asked the others what they would do if they knew that they had to die within an hour. Various ones answered that they would go to the chapel and pray and so prepare for death, but St. Aloysius said, "I would keep right on playing as I am now." He could speak in this manner because he felt

[1] 1 Cor. 10. 31.

himself to be in the state of grace, and knew that in playing he was doing the will of God. By playing at the right time, he was doing what his superiors wanted him to do, and hence he was doing what God wished him to do; this was serving God the best he could at the time being. We see from this that even such things as playing and taking recreation can be made good works, when done at the right time and with the right intention; such things at their proper time may be just as good as prayer, and at times even better.

The good intention is a means of turning the most indifferent things into valuable, good acts. In the Middle Ages men were looking for some means by which all metals could be turned into gold; this they called the philosopher's stone. The good intention is such a philosopher's stone; everything that we touch with it turns into pure gold, — yes, into something more valuable than gold. Inasmuch as God puts into the soul of every Christian the gift of sanctifying grace, He

gives each one a means by which he may make his most simple and most insignificant actions worthy of an eternal reward; all that we need to do is to perform them with the good intention of serving God by them. "Walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work."[1]

What is a good intention? The intention we have in doing something, is described best by saying that it is what we mean by an action. Jonathan, the son of Saul, advised David to hide himself from Saul for a time because Saul wanted to kill David. He meant it well with David in this advice; his intention was good. Joseph's brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites in order to get him out of the way. Did they have a good intention? No, their purpose, their intention, was bad. We have a good intention, when we mean well, when we have a good purpose. To have a good intention in all that we do means that in everything we wish to do the will of God, and wish to serve Him; that we wish to do these

[1] Col. I. 10.

things to give honor to God, to make Him better known and loved by men, and to do them out of the love of God. God created all things; the angels serve Him without ever contradicting His will; the sun, moon, and stars "show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands."[1] All that we have to do in order to act with a good intention is to do as the rest of creation does,—to serve God and praise Him the best we can. All that we have to do is to make real that which we so often say, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost." We will have that good intention, if we are satisfied with the position that God has given us, and try to serve Him in it as well as we can; — if we say, "I will take the place in the general order of things, which God has pointed out for me; out of obedience to Him I will fulfil the duties of my state in life to the best of my powers; I will bear patiently all the sufferings that God may send me. One who has such intentions has

[1] Psalm 18. 1.

the good intentions that turn all actions into pure gold.

To form a good intention we do not need any long formula of prayer. A few sincere words, or even a raising of our thoughts to God, is sufficient. We might say, "O my God, all for Thee," or use some similar words to indicate that what we do we wish to do to please God. This we should do especially in the morning, so that by this good intention we may sanctify the whole day. Since, however, we easily forget the good resolutions we have made in the morning, and by sin often revoke the good intention formed, it is well to renew the good intention from time to time during the day. Grievous sin turns our soul away from God, and converts it to creatures; hence the good intention formed to do all for the love of God, is also destroyed. It is therefore not sufficient to form a good intention once in our life, or at the beginning of the year, since there is danger that we might have annulled it by sin. It is advisable to renew our good intention frequently, espe-

cially in the morning of each day, so that the day may be sanctified to God. Our work becomes easier when we know that what we do we are doing, not for the perishable goods of this world, but for eternity; to work for such a reward makes work a pleasure. There is a story told of a poor lay-brother of some order. This poor old brother was very simple in his life; he had little knowledge, and was occupied nearly exclusively in mending the clothes of the monks in the monastery. When he came to die he was full of joy, and seemed to have no fear of death whatsoever. He was asked how it was that he seemed so joyful, whether he had no fear of the judgment that follows death? He answered, why should I fear death? I know that I am going to heaven, for I have the key of heaven right here with me. With these words he pulled out the needle with which he had worked for years, and said, that at every stitch, he had made the good intention of working only for the honor and glory of God. "And is God to let me go without a reward after I have worked for

Him for so many years?" These were the good brother's last words. His hope in the reward of heaven was certainly well founded, and no doubt was fulfilled. From this example we can learn that, no matter what our work may be, we can turn the instruments of our daily occupation into keys of heaven.

IX

NATURE AND NECESSITY OF ACTUAL GRACE

NATURE OF ACTUAL GRACE

What is actual grace?

Actual grace is that help of God which enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and do good.

GRACE is a supernatural gift of God, bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation. By our own efforts we can acquire all kinds of knowledge and accomplishments; we can acquire wealth; but we cannot by our own efforts acquire grace. Grace is something that we cannot earn; *it is a free gift of God.* Grace is a *supernatural* gift, *i.e.* a gift which has to do with our eternal salvation, and is, therefore, nothing of this world. All that we are and have, comes from God; everything is His gift. God gives us food and clothing; He gives us understanding and free

will; He gives us the talents which we possess; He gives us all that we need for life. God makes the sun shine, and He makes the rain fall; He makes the plants grow and the trees bring forth their fruits. These things are helps for our natural life; they are natural gifts. Grace is not one of these natural gifts; it is above nature. By grace we understand something which God gives us to aid us in working out our salvation. Grace helps us to avoid sin, to be sorry for the sins committed, to do penance for them, to perform good works, to pray rightly, to reach heaven and be eternally happy. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," then we pray for grace. God gives us this help, *because Jesus offered Himself for us, as a sacrifice on the cross*, and thus merited an infinite abundance of grace for us.

Grace has different names, according to the different purposes for which it is given. When it is given to help us perform some good act it is called *actual grace.* It is

called *sanctifying grace*, when it sanctifies us and makes us pleasing to God, as the saints are pleasing to Him. When we pray in the morning and offer our hearts and souls to God, and ask Him to keep us pure and to protect us in the time of temptation, we pray for actual grace, for His help to do good and resist sin. When, however, we renew our baptismal vows, and ask God to renew in us the grace He gave us in Baptism, then we pray for sanctifying grace, — the grace that makes us children of God and objects of His love. Sanctifying grace makes us saints; actual grace calls us to become saints, and helps us to do the work of saints. Sanctifying grace is something permanent that stays in our souls until driven out by sin; actual grace is a passing help to do something good.

When the Archangel Gabriel came to the Blessed Virgin and saluted her, *Hail full of grace*, and announced to her that she was to become the mother of the Saviour, what grace was it that he spoke of then? Evi-

dently he spoke of sanctifying grace, of which the soul of the Blessed Virgin was full, and which made her so pleasing in the eyes of God. Had she not had sanctifying grace, she would not have been so pleasing to God as to be chosen to become the mother of His only Son. This grace she possessed through the merits of Jesus. It is true, Jesus had not yet died, and hence had not yet merited that grace; God had, however, promised to send His Son to redeem the world, and, in view of the great graces that He was to merit, God gave this grace to her who was to be His mother. In the old law, the Patriarchs, and, in general, all good people, were to obtain justification, *i.e.* sanctifying grace, through the hope of a Redeemer to come; how much more, then, she who was to be His mother! She was not merely sanctified and cleansed from sin through the merits of Christ, but from the very first moment of her existence she was preserved from the stain of sin. Her soul was created in sanctifying grace. It was

beautiful and pleasing in the sight of God from the very first moment of its being. To commemorate this privilege the Church celebrates every year the feast of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th of December. On this day we honor Mary because from the first moment of her existence she was filled with sanctifying grace, and for this reason was free from all sin. We cannot have sanctifying grace and be friends of God, and at the same time be in sin and so be His enemies. Just as Mary was conceived in sanctifying grace, so she also preserved it for the rest of her life. She never lost by sin the friendship of God in which she was born. The angel said to her, "The Lord is with thee," and the Lord was with her through sanctifying grace, and remained ever with her. By grace her soul became, as it were, a house of gold, in which the King of heaven loved to dwell.

We see now the difference which exists between actual grace and sanctifying grace. Let us study actual grace, a little more

closely. We will first consider its nature; secondly, its necessity; thirdly, whether God gives His grace to everybody; and, finally, what we have to do on our part in regard to the grace we receive.

Actual grace is so called because it is the grace by which God assists us in our acts, so that we may shun evil and do good. How does God help us by actual grace? Is it externally, as we would help a man to carry a load he could not carry alone? Is it by acting on the powers of the body? No, that would be merely a natural help; grace is a supernatural help. God aids us by internal assistance; by acting, not on the powers of the body, but on those of the soul. Now, what are the powers of the soul on which He acts? Man differs from the animals, as he has intellect and free will. These, then, are the principal faculties of the soul. It is on these that God acts; it is by these, man is to know and love God. It is upon the intellect and the will, then, that God acts in a supernatural way by actual grace.

How does God act on our intellect? He enlightens it; He gives it a supernatural light by which we see the supernatural end for which He has created us, and also the means to reach that end. When God created our first parents, He gave them a right understanding of the purpose of their existence, but they lost this by original sin, and were weakened even in their natural powers of intellect. Since we are born in this sin, and inherit the consequences of it, it is necessary for us to receive from God a supernatural light that we may understand aright, our supernatural end. This God gives us by actual grace by which He so enlightens our mind that we may know our real destiny as Christians, our relation to Him, and know His holy will in regard to us. By the light of actual grace, we see for what we are intended. When we wander from the path which leads to that end, it is by actual grace that we recognize our sad condition, it is by actual grace that we see the danger ahead. By actual grace we recognize

the greatness of our sin, we see how ungrateful we have been to God. By this same grace we understand that we cannot help ourselves, but are entirely dependent on the almighty help of God. By actual grace we see that our salvation lies in a sincere return to Him from whom we have strayed by sin.

How God enlightens our minds by actual grace, we see beautifully illustrated in the case of David. He had offended God by grievous sin, and, far from acknowledging his guilt, he tried to cover it up by the commission of another crime, — that of murder. God sent the prophet, Nathan, to speak to his conscience, and represent to him the greatness of his sin, to show him the extent of his unfaithfulness and ingratitude to God. Under the influence of the grace of God and the words of the prophet, he began to see the enormity of his crimes, and with deep sorrow of heart, he exclaimed, "I have sinned before the Lord;" and after that his constant prayer was: "I know my iniquities, and my sin is always before me. To Thee only have

I sinned, and have done evil before Thee." With this recognition of guilt he received a great longing for interior sanctity. For this he prayed in the following words: "Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit in my bowels. Cast me not away from Thy face; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."[1] This was the work of actual grace. By this grace his intellect was enlightened so that he saw the greatness of his sin, and did sincere penance. Without this supernatural light, he would not have recognized his sin and done penance for it. On the contrary he would, in all probability, have added sins upon sins. To save him from this terrible condition God sent the prophet, Nathan, and at the same time enlightened his mind to see the truth of the prophet's words, and thus be moved to do penance. This interior light of the intellect was actual grace.

By actual grace God not only enlightens the intellect but also moves the will to shun evil

[1] Psalm 50. 12–13.

and do good. One would think that it was sufficient to enlighten our mind and show us the beauty of truth, to make us love it and avoid evil; but unfortunately this is not true. It happens only too often that we know the truth and understand what is good, but we still do that which is evil. "I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man, but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin."[1] Even if a man understands the sad condition of his soul, and the necessity of doing penance, of himself he has not the power to rise from sin; he needs the help of God. God gives him this help by moving his will through actual grace. By actual grace God moves the will of the sinner to hate sin, to fear the eternal punishment of hell, and He gives him supernatural strength to free himself from what is evil and to cling to that which is good. To the just man, *i.e.* one who is in the state

[1] Rom. 7. 22, 23.

of grace, God gives an intense desire for the happiness of heaven, and by this leads him to practise virtue with joy, and to persevere in good until death.

Actual grace consists, therefore, in both an enlightenment of the mind and a moving of the will. Hence our catechism defines it as that help of God by which He enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and to do good. From this we see the importance of actual grace for eternal salvation. All persons who take life seriously and seek to reach the purpose for which they were created, appreciate the value of actual grace, and continually pray for it. Let us say with the Psalmist: "Give me understanding and I will search Thy law, and I will keep it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of Thy commandments, for this same I have desired. Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not to covetousness."[1]

By the sin of our first parents our under-

[1] Psalm 118. 34–36.

standing was not taken away, but it was weakened. This weakness of the understanding and of the will in consequence of original sin has been handed down to us. We can still understand the things of nature, but we cannot of ourselves know the truths which refer to our eternal salvation; these God has made known to us by revelation; to know these we need the help of God. It is for this that the Psalmist prays, when he says, "Give me understanding," *i.e.* give me a right understanding to know what I must do to be happy forever. "Lead me in the path of Thy commandments" that I may be able to observe them. Man is made for heaven, and God has implanted a strong desire for happiness in his heart. However, he must know the way that leads to happiness, and this he cannot know unless God points it out to him. God's grace is the light that leads him in the path of God's commandments. "Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not to covetousness." By reason of original sin, man from

his youth is more inclined to evil than to good. If God does not give us His help, we cannot overcome this evil inclination. Hence we pray that God will act on our heart and move it to go not after the things of the senses, but that we may rather seek the things which God has made known to us and promised us, — His testimonies.

NECESSITY OF GRACE

Is grace necessary to salvation?

Grace is necessary to salvation because without grace we can do nothing to merit heaven.

Grace is not merely valuable, but it is absolutely necessary for salvation. It is absolutely necessary for the unbeliever that he shall believe; it is absolutely necessary for the sinner that he shall be freed from his sins; it is absolutely necessary for the just man that he shall persevere in the state of grace. Without the help of actual grace, one who is an enemy of God cannot become His friend; without it, one who is a friend of God cannot remain such for any length of time.

Actual grace is absolutely necessary for *one who is not justified, i.e.* who is not in the state of grace. It is necessary for the heathen and the Jew that they believe and be baptized. How could such a one come to the knowledge of the true religion, if God did not give him a supernatural light to see the truth? He has been taught a false religion from his childhood, and has grown up with the strongest prejudices against Christianity; or perhaps he has fallen into all sorts of vices and sins. If God did not give him strength, how could he lift the veil from his eyes, or raise himself from the mire of sin into which he has fallen? For such a one, actual grace is absolutely necessary for salvation. Likewise, it is absolutely necessary for *one who has been baptized and has fallen again into mortal sin.* Without the help of God such a one would not come to the recognition of his miserable condition, and form a firm resolution of returning to God. Hence, when we wish to receive the sacrament of Pen-

ance worthily, we pray for the light of the Holy Ghost, to know our sins, and we pray for His help to repent of them and avoid them in the future. Without actual grace we should be blind to the danger in which we are, of losing our eternal salvation. Just as soon as the light of divine grace shines upon our souls, we see there the multitude of sins of which we are guilty, — envy, hatred, impurity, uncharitableness, rash judgment, indifference in works of religion and piety, anger, revenge, etc. Without God's grace we should not have real sorrow for our sins; we should have no hatred of them; we should have no firm resolution to avoid them in the future; our confession would be useless. Without the grace of God, many of us would not be able to overcome the false shame which would prevent us from making a sincere confession.

As actual grace is necessary for a good confession, so *it is also necessary for the worthy reception of the other sacraments.* Who could prepare his heart properly for

the worthy reception of Holy Communion, unless the grace of God assisted him? Children generally receive Holy Communion most worthily, and yet with them the intellect and will are weak; how could they prepare themselves so well, if the grace of God did not help them? Or how could one who is sick, prepare himself to receive the last sacraments, if the grace of God were not there to assist him? He is overcome with bodily pains; his mind is taken up with his sickness; without grace he could do nothing.

Grace is absolutely necessary in order that we be converted to God and receive the sacraments worthily. This is not all; *without grace we cannot perform any work of importance connected with our salvation.* Without grace we cannot decide the important question of the state of life God wishes us to embrace. Without grace we cannot perform the important duties of our calling properly. God must assist us continually. How could a priest, for instance,

perform the important obligations of the priesthood with profit to himself and to those intrusted to his care if God did not give the help of His all-powerful grace?

Without the aid of divine grace we cannot receive the sacraments worthily, nor can we do anything of importance connected with our salvation; *but can we not perform even the ordinary works of piety without the help of God's grace?* Our catechism answers this question by saying, "without grace we can do nothing to merit heaven." It does not say that without grace we cannot do much, but absolutely nothing. Without the help of God we cannot recite the Our Father, or the Hail Mary properly. Without the help of God's grace we cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus so as to benefit us for eternal life. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost."[1] Of course, when we say that without the grace of God we can do nothing good, we do not wish to say that all that is done with-

[1] 1 Cor. 12. 3.

out grace is bad and sinful. Such works are not meritorious for heaven; they are not supernatural; they may be naturally good but useless for heaven. Of ourselves we can do nothing to merit the eternal reward of heaven; heaven is a gift of God. Without the help of grace we may give alms, honor our parents, even recite prayers, but such works would avail nothing for heaven; they are worthy of a reward in this life, but not in the next. Such works are not performed with God and for God, and hence do not deserve a supernatural reward from Him.

Grace is necessary for every good and salutary work, be it great or small. When we wish to perform some good work, we first make a resolution to that effect. This is the beginning of the good work. Then we take the work in hand, and, finally, complete it. Let us suppose that we are going to receive the sacrament of Penance. We begin by making up our mind to go to confession; then we pray for the help of the grace of God, we examine our consciences carefully,

we excite in ourselves a sincere sorrow for our sins, and make a firm resolution to avoid them in the future, and then confess them frankly. We accept the penance the priest gives us, and make good any damage that we may have done to others. For all this, the grace of God is necessary: it is necessary to resolve to go to confession, the good thought comes from God; grace is necessary to continue the good work, and it is necessary to bring the good work to a good conclusion. Actual grace is necessary to begin, continue, and complete every salutary work.

If the good thought comes to us to perform some good work, such as the reception of the sacraments, whence is this good thought? Is it from ourselves? No; St. Paul teaches us, "It is God who worketh in you to will." When we carry out a good resolution, it is again God who "worketh in you also to accomplish."[1] It is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that we will and perform good works. God it is, who works in us the

[1] Philip. 2. 13.

good will, and who gives us strength to accomplish the good deed. Of our own strength we can do nothing. "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."[1] We can do good only through the help of God's grace. With His help we can do everything. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."[2] God by His grace encourages us to do good works; He accompanies the good work by His grace, and by the same grace He brings it to a successful close. "The grace of God is with us from the beginning to the completion," says St. Augustine. "The grace of God prevents man (*i.e.* goes before him) that he will, and accompanies him that he will not in vain."[3] God leads us into the path of salvation, He accompanies us that we remain in it, and finally brings us to the end of our journey. "God completes by His coöperation what He has begun by His operation . . . be-

[1] 2 Cor. 3. 5. [2] Philip. 4. 13.
[3] Cited by Allioli, *New Testament.*

cause if He did not operate that we will, or did not coöperate when we will, we would not be able to do anything good,"[1] says St. Augustine.

This great truth of the necessity of grace for salvation should excite in us, a great distrust in our own strength, and at the same time, great confidence in God. We should acknowledge with gratitude that all that we are and have comes from Him, and that of ourselves we are nothing. Just as God made all things, keeps them in being, and directs all by His providence, so He also works the Redemption and sanctification of all. By His holy grace He redeems us, sanctifies us, and directs us to do good. He gives us supernatural life, nourishes it, and preserves it. In the natural order He makes all things live by the light of the sun; in the supernatural order all live by the light of His grace. "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us."[2] "The Spirit breatheth where He will."[3]

[1] *De gratia et lib. arbit.* c. 17. [2] Psalm 4. 7. [3] John 3. 8.

God is the source of all life, natural and supernatural. "What hast thou that thou hast not received, and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"[1] All that is good comes from God, the source of all goodness. Of ourselves we can sin and do evil, but we cannot do anything to rise from sin or to merit heaven. Natural powers cannot perform supernatural works, and merely natural works do not merit a supernatural reward. These thoughts should make us humble, and humility leads to God. The more we trust in Him rather than in ourselves, the more ready will He be to help us.

This doctrine of our entire dependence upon God is not flattering to human pride. It is, therefore, not surprising that some have been found who were unwilling to believe it. Thus, a British monk, named Pelagius, taught the error that we could do good, worthy of heaven, through our own strength. Others after him, called Semi-Pelagians, taught that

[1] 1 Cor. 4. 7.

we could, at least, make a beginning. Both of these false doctrines were condemned as heretical, by the Church in the Council of Orange, in the year 529. The Fathers of this Council declared solemnly: If any man say that by our natural strength we can think or will anything good, worthy of eternal salvation, or that we can consent to the teaching of faith, *i.e.* the Holy Gospels, without the illumination and assistance of the Holy Spirit who gives sweetness to the consent and acceptance of divine truth, such a one is detained in heretical spirit. The Council of Trent teaches similarly: If any man affirm that we can, without the help of the Holy Ghost, believe, hope, and love, or do penance as we should, . . . let him be anathema,[1] *i.e.* excluded from the Church.

St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, one of the greatest lights of the Church, fought against this heresy. This great saint had in his youth experienced the helplessness of unaided nature; he had found out that of him-

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. VI, c. 3.

self man is weak, and cannot rise from his fall. In his youth he had fallen into bad ways, but his pious mother, St. Monica, prayed for him without ceasing, until, by her prayer, she finally brought about his conversion. Out of curiosity he went to hear the sermons of St. Ambrose, the archbishop of Milan, and through these sermons, God brought him to the knowledge of his miserable condition. Of himself he would not have been able to dispel the darkness of unbelief, nor would he have been able to raise himself from the abyss of sin. It was God who took hold of him with His mighty hand, and raised him up. This was brought about in the following way. One day Augustine was in a garden with his friend Alypius. He was filled with sadness at the state of his soul which the sermons of St. Ambrose brought him to recognize. He was on the point of despairing when suddenly he heard a beautiful voice saying to him, "Take and read." He opened the Scriptures which he had at hand, and read the words, "Let us

walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences."[1] When he had read these words he understood that the inspiration came from God, and he then and there resolved to give himself entirely to Jesus. With his friend Alypius, he hastened to his good mother to inform her of his resolve and gladden her heart. St. Monica was transported with joy at the conversion of her son, and they both joined their voices in giving praise and thanksgiving to Him who had finally heard her earnest and persevering prayer. In this way St. Augustine had experienced in himself the weakness of man and the power of divine grace.

When, therefore, the proud Pelagius arose and taught that man of his own strength could form the resolution of returning to God, and could without God's special help actually return to Him, also that man by his

[1] Rom. 13. 13, 14.

natural powers, could do good and merit heaven; then also did St. Augustine come forth as the champion of grace, and with the keenness of his intellect refute the proud assertions of the heretics. St. Augustine taught that grace is necessary for the unjustified that he be converted, and it is also necessary for the just man that he continue to lead a virtuous life. As regards the first, namely the unconverted, he says, in speaking of the text of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 3, 5 ("Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God"): "If we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything, then we are not sufficient of ourselves to believe, and the power to believe is also of God."[1] Concerning another passage, John 6, 44 ("No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him"), he remarks: "It is faith that draws us to the Father, therefore, if this were not a free gift of God, the Lord would not say: 'No man can come,'" etc.[2]

[1] *De Praed.* l. 1. c. 2. [2] Epist. 194, *ad Sixtum.* n. 12.

Again he says, "Faith would not be in us, if God did not give to each his measure of faith."[1] Of those that are already justified he tells us that grace is also necessary for them, "As the eye of the body, although it is perfectly sound, cannot see, unless it be illumined by light, so also man, though he be justified, cannot live rightly, unless he be illumined by the light of divine grace."[2] St. Augustine fought against the errors of the Pelagians by all the means at his command. In a council of the African bishops he exposed the errors so clearly that the Pope again condemned them, and the emperor, Honorius, banished Pelagius and Celestius from his dominions.

The heresies that man can do good to merit salvation, or that he can at least make a beginning without the help of God, had their origin in human pride. Pride is the sin that God most detests; it is the beginning of all other sins. The proud man makes himself unworthy of the grace of God

[1] Epist. 186, *ad Paulin.* n. 4. [2] *De nat. et gr.* c. 26.

because, instead of asking for it, he practically tells God that he does not need His help. "God resisteth the proud and giveth His grace to the humble," the Holy Scripture tells us. The more a man acknowledges his misery, the more ready God is to help him. Let us, therefore, always be humble, and show that humility by holding fast to the doctrine of the Catholic Church on grace. Let us hold fast to the doctrine that we are always in need of the help of God, that *without His grace we can do nothing to merit heaven, that without His help we cannot begin, continue, or complete successfully any good work for our salvation*, but that it is God who worketh in us the willing and the doing.

X

DISTRIBUTION OF GRACE

GRACE is so necessary that without it we can do nothing for salvation. Without the help of divine grace we cannot begin, continue, or complete any salutary work. God works in us to will and to accomplish the good work. Our salvation is through Him. Of ourselves we can fall and sin, but of ourselves we cannot rise and repent. We must, therefore, look upon Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith.[1] This is what the Catholic Church teaches us concerning the necessity of grace. Our first parents were created in sanctifying grace and placed in paradise. They did not persevere in the state of grace, but fell into sin. Of themselves they were unable to do anything to

[1] Heb. 12. 2.

free themselves from sin; had it not been that God took pity on them, they would have been lost forever. God saved them by sending His only Son to redeem them. The same sad fate would have been ours, for we inherited that sin from our first parents. We, too, were redeemed by Christ, who obtained grace for us. The grace of God brings the unbeliever to faith; it moves the sinner to repentance. This thought of our utter dependence on God should move us to humility and gratitude toward God. It should give us distrust in ourselves, and confidence in God, who is ever ready to help us in our weakness.

It might seem that the doctrine of the necessity of grace would furnish an excuse for leading a bad life. Some one might say: Without the assistance of the grace of God I cannot do anything for my salvation. This is the reason I do not overcome my bad habits; this is the reason I do not lead a good, virtuous life; I have not the grace of God. It is true, without the grace of God

we cannot return to Him and do penance; but it is not true that we have insufficient grace to do penance and obtain salvation. Without grace we cannot be saved, but as St. Paul teaches us, "*Our Saviour will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*"[1] It follows from this that He gives sufficient grace to all men. God gives sufficient grace to all; to the unbaptized that he may come to the knowledge of the truth, and be freed from original sin by Baptism. He gives sufficient grace to the sinner who has lost His friendship, that he may be reinstated in his position as a child of God. Even when it is for some reason or other impossible to receive the sacrament of Baptism or Penance, God still by His grace makes it possible for man to save his soul. The just man, too, continually receives grace to do good, to overcome his evil inclinations, to persevere in virtue, and so avoid sin and merit the kingdom of heaven. Man, by reason of original sin, is

[1] 1 Tim. 2. 4.

more inclined to evil than to good, but the evil inclinations are never so strong that they cannot be overcome. God gives man as much grace as he needs to conquer the temptations to sin. Thus St. Paul instructs the Corinthians: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."[1] We can do good and avoid evil, with the help of God's grace, which He refuses to no one. He Himself has told us, "My yoke is sweet, and My burden is light."[2] We shall be able to carry the burden of His commandments and bear the yoke of His law, since He is always ready to help us carry it. God asks nothing impossible of us, and therefore we know where we are to seek help in all things that seem difficult, or even impossible to us.

That God gives to every one the grace that is necessary to do good and avoid sin, is especially true of those that are baptized,

[1] 1 Cor. 10. 13. [2] Matt. 11. 30.

and so have been made members of God's holy Church. This the Church declared when it condemned the error of Jansenius,[1] who had taught in his book, *Augustinus*, that there are some commandments, which the just could not keep, despite the best of will, because they had not always sufficient grace to do so. The justified have not only at all times sufficient, but they have superabundant grace to avoid sin and merit heaven. They have in their souls a mark impressed by Baptism, which shows that they belong to Christ, and are united with Him who is the source of all grace. As Christians they have prayer and the sacraments, which are the great channels through which grace comes to men. They have the word of God and divine service where one encourages and prays for the other. They are above all in the communion of saints, and so are united spiritually with Christ and all the saints, and partake of their merits. By reason of the communion of saints, all

[1] 1 *Prop. damnata.*

share in each other's prayers and good works; the treasures of the Church are the common property of all. The Christian, far from not having sufficient grace, lives, so to say, in the full noonday sun of God's grace. No Christian, and especially no Catholic, can say that he has not sufficient grace to avoid sin and lead a good and holy life. He has not only sufficient, but more than sufficient, grace. If he has fallen into sin, God by a multiplicity of ways seeks him and urges him to return to Him. God wishes to save him. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."[1] Our Lord Himself tells us that He came for this purpose, namely to save sinners. "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost."[2] He tells us of the solicitude with which He goes after the sinner to bring him back. He compares Himself to the good shepherd who goes after the lost sheep until he finds it, and having found it lays it upon

[1] Ezech. 33. 11. [2] Matt. 18. 11.

his shoulder, and brings it back to the fold. It is His greatest pleasure to go after the sinner, and move him to repentance. He tells us that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that does penance than over ninety-nine just who do not need it.[1] Just as the woman in the gospel lighted a lamp to find one of the ten groats which she had lost, so also our mother, the Church, uses all kinds of means, such as missions, retreats, jubilees, indulgences, to find her lost children and bring them back to the way of salvation. Mary, too, our Mother, is anxious about her children that have strayed from her, and never ceases to pray for them to save them from eternal perdition. She, the refuge of sinners, the Mother of divine grace, is continually obtaining from her Son the grace of conversion for sinners. Can we then say that we have not sufficient grace? "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and patience, and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?"[2]

[1] Luke 15. 7. [2] Rom. 2. 4.

Not only to those that belong to His Church, but to all men, to heathens, Jews, heretics, God gives sufficient grace to know the truth, and to lead them to eternal salvation. God is the father of all men, and loves all His children. He does not will "that any should perish, but that all should return to penance."[1] Christ died for all men, and wishes all men to be saved; and hence, since grace is necessary for salvation, He must give to all the grace necessary for salvation. He has redeemed all men, and calls all to salvation. "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."[2] There is no doubt but that God gives sufficient grace to all. Indeed, we see how He does this, for He commanded His apostles to go forth into the whole world and preach His gospel to every creature.[3] By the preaching of His gospel, He offers to all people the grace of Christianity. Certainly the *Jews* cannot complain that they did not have sufficient grace; for Christ, the way,

[1] 2 Peter 3. 9. [2] 1 Tim. 2. 4. [3] Mark 16. 15.

the truth, and the life, Himself, preached the gospel to them. After Him the apostles preached the gospel to the Jews before they preached it to the Gentiles. The *heathens*, too, were offered this grace through the preaching of the apostles. "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."[1] Since the days of the apostles the grace of the gospel has been offered to the world without interruption by the successors of the apostles, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. The Catholic missionaries have travelled into every country to bring the teaching of Jesus to the pagans. Jesus wishes to give sufficient grace to every man; for this reason He has established His Church as a Catholic Church, that is, a Church to which all men are called, so that there be but one fold and one shepherd. St. Paul tells us the same when he writes, "To the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and the unwise, I am a debtor."[2] All have

[1] Psalm 18. 5. [2] Rom. 1. 14.

a right to have the gospel preached to them by me, as the messenger of God, and I have in consequence an obligation to preach it to them. St. Paul was the Apostle of the nations, chosen by God that he might offer to all the grace of knowing the truth, and of embracing the life of grace in Christianity.

Does God also give sufficient grace to *those to whom the gospel has not yet been preached?* We believe that God also gives them sufficient grace, because He who has made the human heart, and has given it a strong *desire for happiness*, has innumerable ways in which He can act upon the hearts of men and draw them to Himself. He is the divine wisdom that "reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly."[1] He has given man a natural love for the truth, and, if man follows this impulse to the best of his ability, he will be given the means of showing his fidelity to the voice of God speaking through his conscience, and so find eternal life. This inclination, implanted in

[1] Wisd. 8. 1.

the human heart, may be regarded as a grace which God gives to man to draw him to Himself. In this way, even the pagan, who has never heard of Christ, may be saved. This grace is for him sufficient for salvation because God will certainly not allow any one to perish who is sincere and willing to do His will to the best of his knowledge. God asks nothing impossible, and He will, without doubt, accept the good will for the deed in those who are so disposed that they would willingly accept His truth if it were made known to them. If they comply with this first call of grace, they will receive more grace, and will finally be led to justification, and so be put in the way of salvation. God gives His peace and friendship to all men of good will. This good will comes from God, and is a grace, and no doubt many heathens obtain through it their eternal salvation. "And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;

but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."[1] In this way God may lead to Himself those that have not had the gospel preached to them.

Besides this inner desire for truth, God may also use *visible nature* to give men grace. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands."[2] The contemplation of the wonders of nature, the stars of the heavens, the beauties of the trees and flowers, the majesty of the mountains, the expanse of the sea, the wonderful adaptation of all things to their purpose, in fine, the consideration of the universe in its entirety and in its parts, the wonderfully great and the wonderfully small, these things have always awakened in the minds of men the thought of an infinitely powerful, wise, good, and loving God. These things have always moved men and aroused in their souls a

[1] Matt. 8. 11, 12. [2] Psalm 18. 1.

desire to know, love, and serve this God, to come to Him, and be happy with Him. This knowledge and desire of God is a grace, as we learn from the words of St. Paul, "God hath manifested it unto them, for the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also and divinity: so that they are inexcusable, because that when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God or given thanks."[1] From these words of St. Paul we see clearly that the heathens receive sufficient grace to know God, and so be led to serve Him, and thus obtain their eternal salvation. He says that they are inexcusable if they do not come to the knowledge of God, and thus be brought to serve Him and give Him thanks. If they had not received sufficient grace, they would certainly be excusable. God manifests Himself through nature, and thus calls men to His service. This is the call of grace for them.

[1] Rom. I. 19–21.

They that follow this call and seek to honor God to the best of their knowledge and ability will receive more grace, and so will be led on to justification and salvation.

The *voice of conscience* is another means which God uses to call the heathens to Himself. It is the voice of God that tells them what is right and what is wrong, what they must do and what they may not do. It is for the heathens, what the law of God was for the Jews. "For when the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature those things that are of the law, these having not the law, are a law to themselves; who show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts within themselves accusing, or also defending them."[1] Man, as a rational creature, has within himself the power of judging what is right and what is wrong, and if he have the good will, he may thus serve God and be happy forever. It is true that this natural judgment of right

[1] Rom. 2. 14.

and wrong may be obscured by passion and the prejudices in which one has been brought up, so that he may deviate from the path of truth; but it can never be entirely obliterated. A general understanding of right and wrong always remains. We learn from history that many pagans, who were sincere in their search for the truth, came to a knowledge of the one true God. Such a one was Socrates, who was condemned to death by his fellow-citizens because he rejected the worship of the false gods. Like Socrates, so also many other pagan philosophers recognize the existence of one God who had made the world, and saw the falseness of the worship of idols.

There remain also among all peoples portions of the *original revelation* which God made to man in paradise. When men multiplied upon the earth and were scattered over various countries they retained something of the knowledge that God made known of Himself to Adam and Eve in paradise. Thus all people had a

notion of their own misery and sinfulness, and of the need of a Redeemer. All retained an idea of a Saviour to come, although this was often wrapped up in many errors and false conceptions. Now those pagans who expected a Saviour, and were so minded as to accept Him when He should come, and were willing to fulfil the conditions of salvation, and in the meantime followed the dictates of their consciences, to the best of their powers, could certainly be saved, just as the Jews reached heaven through the belief and hope in a Redeemer to come.

Finally, God often brought men to salvation through a direct interposition by *miracles*. An example of this we find narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, concerning Cornelius and his family.[1] We read there how an angel of God appeared to him, and told him to send to Joppe for a man named Peter, who would tell him what he must do, and at the same time Peter also had a vision, which instructed him that he must not refuse to

[1] Acts 10.

receive into the Church those who were converted from paganism; that nothing that the Lord had cleansed was unclean. Up to this time the Jews had looked upon the Gentiles as unclean and would have nothing to do with them; but now God, through a series of miracles, called the Gentiles to the Church, and brought Cornelius to the knowledge of the truth. Similar miracles of God are often related by our missionaries in countries that are just being converted to the faith of Christ. But even if God does not call men in a miraculous way to the faith, He always gives them sufficient grace to know God, and work out their eternal salvation. In His infinite wisdom He has innumerable ways of drawing them to Himself. For this reason St. Augustine says: "Who can enumerate the many gifts the godless receive from Him whom they reject? One among many are the examples of misery which He as a good physician, mixes up with the pleasures of the world, that they might, if they will not hear other-

wise, be thus reminded of the wrath to come, and so be brought into harmony with the word of God whilst they are still wanderers here upon earth."[1] What more could God do for them when even the misery of the world is a blessing to man. We do not know the ways of God, and the various means He uses to give to each one the grace he needs to be saved; but no one shall be lost without his own fault. At the last judgment we shall know the good and the evil every one has done; we shall also know the graces each has received and what use he has made of them. Then we shall recognize the mercy, goodness, and wisdom of God, and shall exclaim: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?"[2] If any one leads a good life, and follows the light that God gives him, he shall undoubt-

[1] Epist. 210, n. 1. [2] Rom. 11. 33, 34.

edly be led to justification and salvation. No one that is lost will be able to say that it was not through his own fault; that he had not received the necessary grace from God. God wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of His truth,[1] and for this reason He gives sufficient grace to all.

MEASURE OF GRACE

Although all men receive sufficient grace, not all receive the same amount of grace; that is, some receive more grace than others. Grace is a free gift of God, and hence He can, without injustice to any one, bestow it according to His good pleasure. Faith, however, teaches us that He gives to every man sufficient grace to reach heaven and be saved. In this unequal distribution of grace God has His own purpose. The end of all His works is His glory; and to obtain that end it is often necessary to give man different measures of grace. Without doubt, Abraham, the father of the chosen people,

[1] 1 Tim. 2. 4.

had more grace than most of his descendants. He required more grace in order to make himself worthy of his calling. Without special grace he would never have obeyed God to the extent of being willing to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, at the command of God. Without an especially great measure of grace he would never have been able to believe that he, a poor wandering shepherd, was to become the father of a great race. Likewise, Moses must have received a very great share of grace to perform the work that God gave him, — that of freeing God's people from bondage in Egypt. The same we believe of the Judges, Prophets, Kings, and especially of the pious king, David. Likewise, the Maccabees and the pious mother of the Maccabean brothers must have received extraordinary grace to fulfil the commandments of God, and bear the sufferings they underwent for the sake of His law. But the greatest measure of grace was received, no doubt, by the Blessed Virgin Mary, since she was called to the

greatest dignity of which any creature was capable, namely to become the Mother of God. Hence the angel saluted her, Hail, full of grace. After her, the precursor of Our Lord, St. John the Baptist, received grace that raised him above all other men; for he was cleansed even before his birth, and the grace which he received made him the greatest of prophets, of whom Jesus testifies that there is no one born of woman greater than John the Baptist. And what shall we say of St. Joseph, to whose guardianship was committed the Son of God? What great graces were necessary to fit him to discharge the duties of his office properly, to protect the Word made flesh and His holy Mother? To him must have been given great graces to make him worthy of holding in his arms the King of kings, whom many great ones of the world had desired to see, and saw Him not. What great measure of grace was given to the apostles to permit them to be continually in the society of Jesus, to hear Him speak, to be His intimate friends! And of

the apostles, St. John was permitted to rest upon His bosom, and stand under the cross, and receive the commission to protect the Mother of Jesus. If we look over the history of the kingdom of God from the beginning to the present time, we see that God has chosen different men to perform different works of importance. Now when God chooses any one for a particular work, He also gives him sufficient help to perform this work for which He has chosen him. Hence men received different measures of grace, according to the object God had in view for them. They that have nothing but their own salvation to look after may receive only the ordinary measure of grace which is sufficient to work out their salvation.

The measure of grace also depends upon the *time, place, and circumstances.* Thus the Jews who were the chosen people of God, among whom God dwelt in a cloud, no doubt received more grace than the pagans. Among the Jews they that lived at the time of Christ, and who heard His own

words, received greater graces than the others. On account of the greater measure of grace that the Jews received, the sin of their rejecting Christ was also greater, hence Our Lord says, "The queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and, behold, a greater than Solomon here."[1] Again, Christians receive more grace than Jews. We live in the kingdom of grace which Christ founded with His precious blood. "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things?"[2] He has not hesitated to sacrifice His own Son; then certainly He will not be miserly with grace which is so necessary for our salvation. Hence the Apostle exclaims, "I give thanks to my God always for you for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus; that in all things you are

[1] Matt. 12. 42. [2] Rom. 8. 32.

made rich in Him in all utterance, and in all knowledge . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace."[1] Again, "Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, in Christ . . . in whom we have Redemption through His blood, the remission of sins according to the riches of His grace, which hath superabounded in us in all wisdom and prudence."[2] What inexhaustible treasures have we not in the holy sacrifice of the Mass? In our churches Jesus dwells bodily; in our tabernacles He is present under the appearances of bread, ever ready to hear our prayers and to shower graces upon us. In the holy sacraments He pours His grace upon our souls in abundance. The sacramentals, too, are given us to obtain various graces. All Christians, however, do not receive the same measure of divine grace. "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ."[3] "And

[1] 1 Cor. 1. 4–7. [2] Eph. 1. 3–8. [3] *Ibid.* 4. 7.

He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors."[1] These each receive more grace than the ordinary faithful, according to their office. But even the graces that the rulers of the flock of Christ receive are for the good of the whole body, for we are all members of one body, of which Christ is the head. All have part in the graces of the various members that compose that body.

There are also *certain times* in which God is pleased to pour out a greater abundance of grace. Such times are great feast days of the Church,—times of penance, such as Advent and Lent. "And that knowing the season, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed."[2] "For He saith: In an accepted time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."[3] Indeed, he

[1] Eph. 4. 11. [2] Rom. 13. 11. [3] 2 Cor. 6. 2.

who celebrates the feast days of the Church in the right way, will not be left without special graces. He will receive the Child, born in his soul, on Christmas day; he will rise with Christ to a new life, on Easter; he will receive the Holy Ghost on Pentecost.

Our Lord has been pleased to attach special graces to *certain places*, such as places of pilgrimage, where the events of His Passion and death are commemorated in an especial manner, or where His Mother is especially honored, or where the body of one of His friends is kept and honored for His sake. In such places God often works miracles, healing bodily infirmities or granting the conversion of sinners, consoling the afflicted and helping the tempted. All Catholic churches are such special places of grace, and this is especially true of each one's parish church. Here Our Lord dwells in the tabernacle, and invites us, "Come to Me all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."[1] Many undergo great

[1] Matt. 11. 28.

dangers and make great journeys in order to pray in places where Our Lord was born, suffered, and died; but we need not go so far, for a few steps from us He dwells ever ready to receive us. There in our own parish church we can speak to Him, tell Him of our needs, and receive grace in abundance. If we go to Him with confidence, we may be sure that He will not let us go away empty-handed. The parish church is for every one the best place of pilgrimage; for this is the intention of the Church. She directs the priest to recite the following prayer on the day of the dedication of the church, "O God, graciously hear the prayers of Thy people and grant that all who enter this temple to ask good things of Thee, may rejoice in the obtaining of all their petitions." [1] "Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid." [2]

Finally, the measure of grace that each receives may depend on *peculiar circum-*

[1] *Miss. Rom. Com. Dedicat. Eccl.* [2] Heb. 4. 16.

stances. It may depend on the power of the man to receive the grace of God. Thus Our Lord tells the parable of the master that gave to his servants five, two, or one talent, according to each one's powers. Nature goes before grace, and grace builds on nature. Thus we might expect that a diversity of grace would come from a difference in the natural dispositions and powers of the individuals receiving it. Likewise, he who recognizes his need best, and earnestly asks for grace, may be expected to receive a greater portion than he who does not. The Saviour deferred His coming upon earth, until the time when the world should have recognized its inability to help itself. It was only after many centuries, when men came to the understanding that no one, except God Himself, could save them from sin and misery, that God became man. He came when the yearning of man expressed itself in those beautiful words, "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds

rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour."[1] This grace for which man yearns becomes all the more abundant, the more he prepares his heart to receive it. Often, too, a man receives grace on account of the prayers of others. So, St. Paul owed his conversion to the prayers of St. Stephen; St. Augustine, to the prayers of St. Monica. Others receive grace on account of the sanctity of the preacher whose sermons they hear; thus the first sermon of St. Peter converted three thousand men. Another circumstance may be some special work that God wishes to accomplish at that time; thus when He was founding His Church He poured out the Holy Spirit more abundantly, as St. Paul says.[2] This extraordinary abundance of grace did much to spread the faith in Christ rapidly. The same thing happens to-day when there is question of converting a new people to the faith. There is often then an abundance of miracles, or, at

[1] Is. 45. 8. [2] Titus 3. 6.

least, a great movement toward the truth that facilitates the conversion of a great multitude. This has been observed, too, in Christian countries at the time of a mission or a jubilee, or at the beginning of a new place of pilgrimage.

God gives to every man sufficient grace to obtain salvation. There are, however, special times and places of grace, as there may be special occasions and circumstances for God to give an extraordinary measure of grace. "Grace," says St. John Chrysostom,[1] "is poured out over all. It does not flee the Jew nor the Gentile, the Greek nor the Barbarian, nor the Scythe, not the freeman nor slave, not man nor woman, not the aged nor the young." St. Denis the Martyr says, "The immense and infinite sea of divine light is free to all. All can participate in it."[2] No one is without the grace sufficient to save him. Just as the sun gives his light to all, so also God gives His grace to every one, that all may come to the knowledge of the truth and possess eternal life.

[1] Hom. 7, *in Joan.* [2] Hier. c. 9.

XI

COÖPERATION WITH GRACE

Can we resist the grace of God?

We can and unfortunately often do resist the grace of God.

GRACE is absolutely necessary to man that he may obtain his supernatural end and be forever happy in heaven. Without grace no one can believe, no one rise from sin and do penance, no one can begin, continue, or complete any work worthy of eternal reward. God gives sufficient grace to all because He wishes all men to be saved. No one is lost except through his own fault. God gives His grace to men, and if they are not saved, the fault is theirs. Man is a free agent; God will not save any one against his will. "And we helping do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain."[1]

[1] 2 Cor. 6. 1.

When we consider the necessity of grace for salvation and the goodness of God in distributing it so abundantly, we should imagine that men would be anxious to receive it, and coöperate with it, that they would pray for it continually and accept it with joy and gratitude. How can any one reject the grace of God and refuse to work with it? Yet our catechism tells us that this is possible and unfortunately happens only too often.

When do we resist grace? Let us suppose that some one is in mortal sin, out of a false shame has neglected to confess his sin, and now he is going to go to confession. A voice within him seems to say to him: Now is the time to confess this sin and free your soul from this burden; it will never become more easy by letting it go, on the contrary the longer you let it go the worse it will be, and the more difficult will the confession become; you must tell it some time or other; do it right now. When he comes to go to confession the false shame overcomes him, and he again conceals that sin, he commits a

double sacrilege, making a bad confession and receiving Holy Communion unworthily. Grace called him; God enlightened him regarding what he was to do; He also offered him motives to do what was right; He was ready to assist him to make a good confession; but the unfortunate man did not listen to the inspirations of grace and withstood the help God was offering him. *He resisted grace.* Had he followed the invitation of God's mercy, all would have been right; he would again have been a child of God. So it often happens that men are called by God's grace to return to Him, but they reject the call and remain in their sins. All sinners are called to repentance in hundreds of ways, but they close their hearts to the call; when they hear the voice of God, they harden their hearts.

Why does God permit men to resist Him? Could He not make them obey Him? God is omnipotent; He can do all things; He can also make men accept His grace, and do His will; but He does not wish to force

them. Why is this? God created man to His own image and likeness; He gave him understanding and free will. God wanted to create a being that would serve Him of its own free will; all creatures serve Him, but they cannot give God the glory that man can give Him because their service is a compulsory one. Free will belongs to the nature of man. Although our will was weakened by the sin of our first parents, it was not destroyed. By grace it is again strengthened to do good, but its freedom is not taken away. By grace God does not destroy His own work, the liberty of man; but He perfects it, so that the inclination to evil by reason of original sin may be more easily overcome. Man has free will; he can accept the grace which God offers him, or he can resist it. God calls man by grace; He warns and invites, but does not force him to do good and shun evil. "Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him."[1]

[1] Ecclus. 15. 18.

That man is free to do good or evil, we can see from numerous examples in Holy Scripture. Thus we have in the very first pages of the Holy Scriptures the story of Cain, the son of Adam and Eve. Cain was filled with envy and hatred against his brother, Abel, because Abel was pious and good, and for this reason pleasing to God. This hatred was very sinful in Cain, and was about to lead him into still greater sins. Cain began to think of how he might do away with his brother. God wished to save him from this great crime, and for this reason warned him in the kindest manner. He said to him, "Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it."[1] Cain paid no attention to this kind warning of God, and became the murderer of his innocent brother. And even after the crime was committed God

[1] Gen. 4. 6, 7.

spoke to him to move him to penance, but Cain would not confess his guilt, and remained stubborn. He resisted the grace of God, calling him to do penance, and that of his own free will, despite all that God did to bring him to a recognition of his sin and to do penance for it.

From this example we see that God offers His grace of conversion to the sinner, that He calls him, warns him, wishes him to return, but that He does not take away his free will. Just as Cain was free to listen to the warning of God, or to close his ear to it, so every man has the freedom of his will and can do good, or reject the grace that God offers and do evil. God offers His grace, but He does not compel any one to accept it. If the sinner neglects the loving voice of God and persists in his evil ways, he does so, not because God does not give him sufficient grace to be converted, but because of his own free will, which God will not take away from him. *That man is free to follow the call of grace or to*

resist it, is either implied or expressed in many other passages of Holy Scripture, especially in those which call man to do penance for sin. Thus when the prophet admonishes us, "To-day if you shall hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts,"[1] *i.e.* do not listen to the call of God as though your hearts were of wood or stone, but bring hearts that are receptive, on which the grace of God can make an impression. When the prophet says this, he evidently implies that it rests with us to receive the grace of God or to reject it; that we can allow our hearts to be moved by the grace of God, or that we can harden them, so that grace will be fruitless; in other words, that we have free will and that it is not destroyed by grace. In the same way the freedom of man's will to coöperate with or to resist grace is implied in all the exhortations to do penance which we find throughout the Holy Scriptures. No one is forced; all are invited. Our Lord always appealed to the free will of His

[1] Psalm 94. 8.

hearers when He invited them to follow Him. "If any one *will* be My disciple," He says, "let him take up his cross and follow Me." "If thou *wilt* be perfect," He says, "deny thyself, take up thy cross daily, and follow Me." He does not compel us to come to Him, but He invites us. We are free to accept or to reject the invitation.

It has been this way from the beginning. The apostles preached the gospel in every country; some received it with joy, others rejected it, and continued in false worship and their evil ways. All used their free will either in accepting or rejecting the grace offered them. So St. Peter in his first sermon on Pentecost said, "Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . They therefore that received his word were baptized and there were added in that day about three thousand souls."[1] No doubt there were many

[1] Acts 2. 38, 41.

more that heard his discourse and did not receive his word. Again when St. Paul preached in the Areopagus at Athens, and proclaimed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, many laughed at him; others, more polite, said, "We will hear you another time." "But certain men adhering to him did believe, among whom was also Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."[1] *So it has been to the present day.* Bishops and priests preach the word of God, they admonish and warn, they endeavor to turn men away from their sins and lead them to penance; many listen and turn to God, are heartily sorry for their sins, and lead better lives; many, too, persist in their errors and sins. All are free; the grace of God compels none so as to take away his liberty of will. God gives His grace, but He wants us of our own free will to coöperate with it. The same is true of the graces He gives us by which He speaks, not through some person, but directly to our

[1] Acts 17. 34.

heart. "Behold I stand at the gate and knock, if any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me."[1] God wishes to give us His grace, but He will not force Himself upon us; He knocks at the door, leaving it to our free will whether we will open the door or not.

That God does not compel any one by His grace to do good and avoid evil, so as to take away his liberty, we can also see by our natural reason. Through compulsion God would destroy our free will; but we know that we cannot do anything good or bad if we have not freedom of will. We are not responsible for things we cannot avoid. If a man commits murder, he is punished; but if it can be proven that he was insane and hence did not know what he was doing, and so did not commit the deed of his own free will, he is not punished for it. Likewise, if God made us do good acts by compelling us, so as to take away our freedom

[1] Apoc. 3. 20.

of will, we would not deserve any reward for such acts. To commit a sin we must have sufficient knowledge and the free consent of the will. For a good act that deserves reward, the same is necessary. If any one is forced by another to do some good or bad act, he does not deserve any reward or punishment for it; the responsibility falls on him that forced him to the act.

If God compelled men to accept His grace and so do good and avoid evil, these good acts would not be good, or rather they would be good, but *they would not be our good acts, but God's.* We would not deserve to be rewarded for them, and thus it would be impossible for us to merit heaven. Without freedom of the will it is impossible to merit anything. Without freedom of the will we could not do anything evil; we could not sin, and hence we could not be punished for it. God gives us grace to help us do good and shun sin, but He wants us to show ourselves faithful to Him, and so, through the help of His grace, merit

heaven as a reward. For this reason He does not take away our free will. This is also what the Church teaches us in the Council of Trent, "If any one say that the free will of man was lost or was destroyed by the sin of Adam, or that it is a thing that exists only in the empty name, or that it is an empty name without the thing signified, or that it is a mere fiction introduced into the Church by the devil, let him be anathema,"[1] that is, such a one is excluded from the Church as a heretic. Again the same holy Council teaches, "If any one say that it is not in the power of man to lead a bad life, but that the bad as well as the good works are the works of God, and that, not only by permitting them, but in the real sense; so that the betrayal of Judas, as well as the calling of Peter, are the work of God, let him be anathema."[2]

These decrees were directed against *Martin Luther*, the author of the Protestant Reformation, who had *asserted that by the sin*

[1] Sess. VI, can. 5. [2] *Ibid.* can. 6.

of Adam, man had lost entirely his free will, so that he is unable to do anything good or bad, but that all actions good and bad are God's, and that man is only an instrument which God uses, just as a carpenter uses a saw. It is clear that if that were true, man would not be responsible for his acts. We could no more blame a man for what he did than we blame a knife which has been used to commit murder. As we do not think of punishing the instrument for the crime that was committed with it, just as little would it be right for God to punish us, if we were not free in our actions and were only, as it were, lifeless instruments in His hands. We would not commit sin, but God would be the author of all crimes. What a blasphemy! How would God be all-just and all-holy, if He were the author of all the injustice and of all the sins that are committed? We would not be able to do anything that is good and worthy of reward. God could not promise us heaven as a reward for our faithfulness. There

would be no room for heaven and hell. Our own understanding tells us that this cannot be true, that we have free will, and that we are responsible for what we do. God created man to His own image and likeness. Just as God has intellect and free will, so also has man. Free will belongs to our nature. Through original sin all supernatural gifts were lost; but those that belong to our nature, such as the immortality of the soul, the intellect, and the freedom of the will, were not destroyed. Christ redeemed us from sin, and through the sacraments which He established in His Church we obtain again those supernatural gifts of grace which were lost by sin. In giving us these supernatural gifts He does not take away those that belong to us by right of nature, understanding, and free will. He elevates them, and makes them more powerful. By actual grace God illumines the intellect, and He strengthens the will that we see better what is good and be more inclined to do it. Grace does not do all; it helps the natural

powers of man and turns them to God. It is called actual grace because it helps us *to act* according to the will of God. Grace, therefore, does not deprive us of our free will; otherwise our acts would not be ours but God's.

Actual grace consists in an enlightening of the understanding and a moving of the will to know and to do good and to shun evil. *It is true by this enlightening of the understanding man often clearly sees the good, but from this it does not follow that he will do what he understands to be good.* He will see clearly that his manner of living is wrong; but it does not follow from this that he will leave his old ways and be converted. The scribes and Pharisees could not deny the truth of Christ's teaching; He had confirmed His words by many miracles, and He had told them, "Though you will not believe Me, believe the works."[1] But were they converted? Far from it; when they could not deny the doctrine they killed

[1] John 10. 38.

the Teacher. Through the preaching of the missionaries many heathens have come to the understanding that Christianity is the true religion; but they did not accept it because they did not feel inclined to change their sinful ways of living. They "loved darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil."[1] The same is true to-day; many would become Christians if they did not have to lead Christian lives. Even among those who call themselves Christians, but are not Catholics, there are no doubt many who see clearly that the Catholic Church is the Church which Jesus Christ established for the salvation of souls, but for worldly reasons — for the sake of the opinion of men, for the sake of money, out of human respect, etc. — they do not enter the Catholic Church. God has illumined their understanding; He has made them understand the truth, but He has left them their free will; He has not compelled them to accept His truth against their will.

[1] John 3. 19.

The same is true as regards the moving of the will. God uses various means to move the will of man to do good. He arouses in man the sentiment of fear of punishment, hope of eternal reward, the sentiments of love and gratitude; He has loved us first, and has showered His gifts upon us in abundance. Through these sentiments a great force is brought to bear on the will of man to do good and to avoid offending so good a God by sin. Who, when he reads or hears the words of Our Lord declaring that hell is an inextinguishable fire, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, does not resolve to lead a good life, so as not to fall into so terrible a punishment? Likewise, when one hears of the happiness and pleasures of heaven which are so great that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him,"[1] every one is moved to the resolution to do all in his power to reach

[1] 1 Cor. 2. 9.

this happy state, where there will be no pain nor suffering, nor evil of any kind. When we hear a sermon on the goodness of God, that He has loved us as His children, even before we were born into this world; if we turn our eyes to the cross and are reminded of all that Jesus suffered to save us from sin and eternal death; when we contemplate the excessive love of Jesus, shown us in the Blessed Sacrament; — our hearts, unless they be as hard as stone, will be moved to love Him in return. As strong, however, as this movement of the heart to love God and to shun evil may be, it does not take away our free will. We remain free to resist this impulse for good. Do we not see multitudes of people who, despite the fear of hell and the hope of heaven, continue to lead sinful lives? Many there are who care nothing for the love of God, and who abuse the gifts He bestows on them, to insult and offend Him. The great gift of free will which God gave them to serve Him, they use in order to sin against Him.

Would it not be better then that men had no free will, and that God should compel them to serve Him, seeing that so many abuse free will? No; God willed man to be free, and what God wills is always best. God willed to have different creatures, and in the multitude and difference of creatures consists the beauty and order of the world. There are some that serve God necessarily. The stars of the heavens go their way and fulfil the commandments of God, but they are not free; they cannot do otherwise than obey the will of God. He has prescribed their course and established the laws that rule their motion; they carry out His will, but of necessity. So it is with all other things that have not received intellect and free will. Besides these creatures God also wished to have some to serve Him, knowing what they do; and He created the angels and man. God wished to give them free will that they might serve Him of their own accord. He gave them free will, even when He knew that some would use this

gift against Him and refuse to serve Him. Even at the risk of having some men disobey Him and refuse His service, He gave man free will, that some, at least, might serve Him of their own free will and out of love. Though our first parents disobeyed Him, and weakened their will for good by sin, God helps us by His grace to overcome the weakness of our will and the inclination to evil; yet He does not force us to serve Him; He leaves us still free. God Himself is infinitely free and loves to have His children free. He has commanded us, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart."[1] We could not obey this commandment if we had not free will. It is true, without freedom of the will there would be no sin, no hell; but without freedom of the will there would likewise be no virtue, no heaven, no supernatural happiness. It is, therefore, not better to be without a free will.

But let us suppose that some one despite all this would still prefer not to have free

[1] Matt. 22. 37.

will so as not to be able to sin and endanger his salvation. To such a one we can say, you have your free will, you can do with it what you will. Give your free will to God, by resolving not to follow your own will, but to inquire in all things what God wills you to do. Jesus taught us the "Our Father" in which we say daily, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Try to make this prayer true in your case. Do nothing that is in the least opposed to the will of God; let your will be entirely absorbed in His will; imagine that you have no will of your own except to do the will of God. When you have succeeded in doing this then you will have obtained true liberty, — the liberty of the children of God. This is true liberty, — to be free from the domination of passion and the evil inclinations of the flesh, to be able to give one's self unreservedly to Him, to will nothing but what God wills. It is the liberty of the saints to will nothing but good.

After this liberty we must strive; it is the

liberty of the angels and saints in heaven. It is true, we shall never reach it entirely in this world, but the closer we approach to it, the more pious and the more perfect we shall be. In heaven we shall acquire it in its fulness; there we shall not be disturbed by evil passions and sins, we shall will only good and what God wills. The saints, too, have lived here upon earth; they have denied their own free will in order to do in all things the will of God. Now their will is entirely united to His will; what He wills, they also will; the prayer, "Thy will be done," is realized in them. It is to strive for this liberty that so many men and women in the Church become monks and nuns and take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, that they may become free from the things of the world, deny their own will, and do only the will of God. This is what Our Lord meant when He said, If thou wilt be perfect, deny thyself and follow Me.[1]

[1] Matt. 19. 21.

Instead of resisting grace we must co-operate with it. Let us see by an example what this means. A small child is to learn to walk. The mother puts it on its feet, but without letting go of it. What must the child do that it may learn to walk? Evidently it must do something on its part; it must try to stand on its feet; it must endeavor to take steps. If it refuses absolutely to do anything, it will never learn how to walk. So it is with the grace of God. God does all that is necessary on His part, but we, too, must do something. He helps us and encourages us by His preventing grace; He, as it were, moves us along and shows us what we are to do. Man must allow God to help him; he must try to do all in his power to perform the good work. If man refuses to accept the grace of God, the good work will remain undone, and he will have received the grace of God in vain.

We can see this still more clearly by considering *a few examples of resisting grace*,

narrated in the Holy Scriptures. It was certainly a great grace to be called to the crib of Our Lord when He was born. Men had waited for the promised Redeemer for thousands of years. What a great privilege it was to be called to see and adore Him as soon as He was born into the world! This grace was offered to the *wise men from the East* and to *some shepherds* who tended their flocks in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. They accepted the grace of God, and came and found the Saviour. Would they have been benefited by this invitation if they had done nothing on their part? Certainly not. They would not have seen the King of kings. They coöperated with grace. The shepherds said, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us;"[1] and they came with haste. The wise men, in like manner, when they saw the star, consulted with themselves to learn its meaning; they made the necessary preparations for the long journey,

[1] Luke 2. 15.

and did not fear any obstacle; they despised all dangers, and did not rest until they found the Child whom they had been called to see. Both the shepherds and the wise men found the Saviour, and were rejoiced by the sight, because they did not neglect the grace of God, but coöperated with it.

On the other hand, Herod and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were also offered the grace of coming and adoring the Saviour, but they resisted the calling grace of God. The wise men told them that the King of the Jews had been born, and that they had seen His star in the East. The chief priests and scribes even named the place, where, according to the old prophecies, He was to be born. But they did not go to see Him for whom the people had sighed and prayed for centuries and centuries; because they did not coöperate with it, they lost the benefit of the grace that was offered them. Herod went even further; he sought the Child, not to adore the Saviour, but, if possible, to murder Him.

Later on the *priests, scribes, and Pharisees* acted in the same manner. Christ Himself preached His doctrine to them; He called them to eternal life; He confirmed His teaching by many signs and miracles; He proved to them that He was the One who was to come, who had been foretold by the prophets. Still, despite this enlightening of their minds, they hardened their hearts to His influence, and did not rest in their hatred of Him until they saw Him nailed to the cross. It was certainly a great grace for these unfortunate people that Christ Himself undertook to teach them; but they resisted this great grace, and hence it was of no avail to them for their eternal salvation. Their condition was even worse than before, because they rejected the call of God.

If any one resists the grace of God, that grace is not only useless for him, but there are besides this many evil consequences connected with this infidelity. Such a one makes himself unworthy to receive further grace; and

when we consider the necessity of grace for salvation, we can understand what a terrible thing it is to trifle with the grace of God, and make ourselves unworthy to receive more. Again, it puts upon us a great responsibility, for we must one day give an account of the use we have made of the help which God has given us by His grace. Finally, if we resist grace, we sin against our own salvation. By resisting grace we deprive ourselves of that which is absolutely necessary for our salvation. Such a sin can easily become a sin against the Holy Ghost, which would render our conversion most difficult, if not quite impossible. We must, therefore, be on our guard not to close our hearts to the influence of grace, but rather accept it with gratitude and work with it.

Our coöperation with grace must be faithful. Fidelity is the mark of a good servant who serves his master well, remains with him, does all his master commands him to do, and is perfectly honest in his service.

We, too, will be faithful servants of God, if we are mindful of our supernatural destiny, work carefully for our salvation, and do the will of God in all things, accepting with gratitude the graces He gives us. Such a faithful servant was St. Paul.[1] When on his way to Damascus Our Lord called him by His grace to the knowledge of the truth; he asked, "Lord, what wilt Thou that I do?" And when Our Lord told him to go to Damascus, that he would be told there what to do, he went straightway and did all that Annanias told him. In this way he continued through his whole life. He never consulted his own ease, but worked and suffered for his Master's cause until death. He did the will of God in all things. He allowed himself to be led by the grace of God, and coöperated faithfully with it. For this reason God blessed his work and did great things through him. Hence he could truthfully say, "I have labored more abundantly than all of the apostles, yet not I, but the

[1] Acts 9.

grace of God with me."[1] Therefore, both the grace of God and St. Paul worked together, or, in other words, he coöperated with the grace of God, and hence he achieved great things. "His grace hath not been void in me." He experienced in himself the greatness of the grace of God, and hence he warns us not to neglect it in ourselves. "We helping do exhort that you receive not the grace of God in vain,"[2] *i.e.* do not, by placing obstacles in the way, make the grace of God useless in yourselves, but rather work with it and exert yourselves to use the grace of God, that you may bring forth fruit in abundance. Look upon the grace which God gives you as a talent that you must work with and increase. Just as the master in the gospel gave to those servants, that had made good use of the talents given them, twice as many, so God will also double our grace if we make good use of it. He will give us "grace for grace"[3] and lead us continually to higher degrees of virtue. We often won-

[1] 1 Cor. 15. 10. [2] 2 Cor. 6. 1. [3] John 1. 16.

der at the high degree of sanctity some saints have reached, and at such times we are inclined to forget that they, too, were human and lived here upon earth surrounded by the same dangers and temptations as ourselves. The saints had to live the same life that we are living. The reason for their great sanctity was in this that they followed faithfully the impulse of the grace of God. They received it with gratitude, coöperated with it, and so received continually a greater abundance of this gift of God's mercy. If we abandon ourselves to the influence of grace, and allow it to work on our souls, we, too, will grow continually in holiness, for "this is the will of God, your sanctification."[1]

[1] 1 Thess. 4. 3.

XII

ON GRACE OF PERSEVERANCE. CONCLUSION

ON GRACE OF PERSEVERANCE

What is the grace of perseverance?

The grace of perseverance is a particular gift of God which enables us to continue in the state of grace till death.

THROUGH the sin of our first parents we lost the friendship of God, and became His enemies; of ourselves we were unable to rise from sin or to do anything to regain the good pleasure of God. God took pity on our helpless condition, and sent His only begotten Son to redeem us. By grace, which He obtained for us, and which was applied to our souls in Baptism, we were cleansed from sin and made children of God and heirs of His kingdom. By His grace we were justified, and the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity were infused into our souls. All this was done, not on

account of any merits on our part, but by the mercy and goodness of God. Divine grace did not destroy our nature, but elevated it above its own innate powers; it made us capable of performing works, meritorious of heaven. Divine grace raises the soul to God, so that we become, in the words of the Apostle, "partakers of the divine nature." By divine grace God Himself dwells in our souls; our bodies become the temples of the Holy Ghost; we become sons of God. Just as iron is transformed by heat, so the soul is transformed by divine grace. Naturally, iron is cold and hard, but when it becomes heated it becomes soft and pliable; its whole nature seems changed; before it was dark in color, now it is luminous; it was cold, now it is hot; it was inflexible, now it is soft and pliable. Likewise the soul, when it is adorned with sanctifying grace, is totally changed; it is still the same soul, it has still its natural faculties, but it has acquired new and higher properties. If we could see it, we would scarcely believe it to be the same being

it was before. The soul is now inflamed with the love of God; it has become obedient to His holy will; it no longer finds its pleasure in sin, but rather in the service of its Creator. This happy state will continue until it is destroyed by mortal sin. Mortal sin drives the grace of God from our hearts, and casts us back into the misery from which God, through His grace, rescued us. The state of grace is a free gift of God; it was given us not by reason of our deserts, but on account of the goodness and mercy of God. Although grace is a free gift of God, it does not on that account destroy our free will; we are still free to reject it and turn to sin. God wishes not a compulsory but a free service, and therefore He does not take away our free will. As long as we live we are in danger of losing the grace of God by committing wilful mortal sin, and so of losing the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven which is to be its reward and completion in the next world. Hence the question presents itself, whether we can of our

own strength continue in the state of grace until death, or whether in this, too, we are dependent on God. To continue in the state of grace until death we call *final perseverance.*

To *persevere* means to continue in some state or action; thus, when a boy continues in his studies, despite all temptations to leave them, we say that he is very persevering in his studies. Generally, we mean by perseverance only continuing in good; so, a man who has been given to cursing, and after a good confession makes a firm resolution to sin no more, and keeps that resolution, is said to be persevering or to have perseverance. Our catechism on this question, however, speaks of perseverance, not for a time, but until death; this we call *final perseverance*, because it lasts till the end of our life. Final perseverance, then, consists in continuing in the state of grace until death; and this, the catechism tells us, is a special grace of God. Final perseverance comprises two things: resistance to mortal

sin and hence continuing in the state of grace, and the coming of death whilst we are in the state of grace. If one should continue in the state of grace for years and years, but fall into mortal sin just before death, we could not say of him that he persevered till the end or that he had final perseverance. On the other hand, a person that dies immediately after Baptism, before there was even so much as a chance to commit sin, would have persevered in grace until death. Final perseverance does not depend on the length of time one spends in the state of grace, but rather on dying in that blessed state of union with God. To have final perseverance it is not enough to resist sin for days, months, or even years, but we must resist sin and remain in the state of grace until death. The essential thing is to be found a friend of God when He calls us to give an account of our life.

Our catechism calls final perseverance a *particular gift of God.* It is a gift, *i.e.* it is given to men, not for their merits, not

because they have deserved it, but out of mercy and love. God is our Sanctifier and Saviour; our sanctification through grace and our salvation depend entirely on His free will. We become His children, because He wills to adopt us; we become heirs of His kingdom, because He wills to give it to us; we are made happy forever, because by His grace of perseverance He assists us to conquer sin, and by the disposition of His divine providence allows death to end the time of our trial here upon earth whilst we are His friends. The grace of final perseverance is not included in sanctifying grace; otherwise every one who has been baptized would persevere, and could, therefore, no longer fall into sin and be lost. It is true, by sanctifying grace we are made children of God and receive a right to the kingdom of heaven; but we must also remember that our free will is not taken away, and that consequently we can still sin grievously, and lose the friendship of God together with the right to heaven. This right to the inheritance of

the kingdom of heaven is given to the children of God; heaven is promised to His friends, and therefore, when through sin we become His enemies, we lose also our right to the reward of the obedient sons and friends of God. As long as we remain in the state of grace heaven is ours, but just as soon as we fall into mortal sin then heaven is lost to us. Final perseverance is a gift distinct from sanctifying grace; it is, as the catechism says, a *particular* gift of God. All who possess sanctifying grace do not persevere in the state of grace until death; many unfortunately throw aside this precious gift of divine grace and commit mortal sin. Unless these do penance and are again reinstated into the friendship of God, they will be lost for all eternity. "He that shall persevere to the end, shall be saved."[1] That final perseverance is a particular gift of God is taught by the Catholic Church in the Council of Trent: "If any one shall say that one who is justified can persevere in the

[1] Matt. 24. 13.

justice he has received, without the special help of God, or that with it he cannot persevere, let him be anathema,"[1] *i.e.* cut off from the Church. It is the teaching of the Church that without the special help of God we cannot remain in the state of grace until death, and that with that help we can persevere in grace until the end of our lives. In order that we may continue a long time in the state of grace it is necessary for us to overcome many temptations and avoid mortal sin; to do this we need the help of divine grace, which God is ever ready to give us. Final perseverance, however, consists especially in dying in the state of grace. This is not for us to dispose of; God in His wise providence regulates the time of our death. The gift of final perseverance is the grace of God by which in His providence He so disposes as to bring about our departure from this world at a time when we are in His friendship. With some the gift of final perseverance consists in the special help of God

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. VI, can. 22.

to overcome temptations until death; with others it consists in the removal of the danger of sin; with others it is a sudden death that takes them out of life before they sin; with others again, it consists in a prolonging of life to give them time for repentance; with some it consists in aid to resist sin, and with others in a timely death.

From what has been said we can see that even in the case of *small children* who die before they acquire the use of reason, and hence the power to sin, final perseverance is a special gift of God. To them applies the sentence of Holy Scripture: "He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners, he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul."[1] It is certainly a special gift of God to be taken out of this world whilst in the state of grace, before that state is lost by sin. The same may be said of the sinner who does penance, and

[1] Wisd. 4. 10, 11.

after receiving forgiveness for his sins dies before he can commit another sin. He, too, is translated lest sin beguile his understanding. In the same way one who has fallen into sin receives a particular gift of God, when through His mercy he is given time for repentance. Just as grace is given us without merit on our part, so also, God makes us persevere in grace until death; so that if we are saved, it is through the mercy of God that we obtain salvation. "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus."[1] As the beginning of the life of grace is from God, so is its perfection in the glory of heaven.

Final perseverance is a free gift of God, and cannot be merited by us, but it can be obtained through fervent prayer. Our Lord admonishes us "to watch and pray." He taught us the Our Father in which we ask, "Thy kingdom come" and "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." Without the gift of final perseverance His

[1] Philip. 1. 6.

kingdom will not come to us, nor will we be delivered from evil; for certainly there can be no greater evil than to be separated from God by sin and to lose heaven for eternity. Jesus wishes us, therefore, to pray for the grace of final perseverance. If we could merit this grace by our good works, we would not need to pray for it. His admonition to pray for final perseverance means, therefore, that we cannot merit it; but, on the other hand, it also means that we can obtain it by prayer, otherwise He should not have told us to pray for it. The Church in her prayer teaches us the same lesson; on the third day after Passion Sunday she prays that God might "Give us a persevering service in His will." St. Augustine, who defended this doctrine against the Pelagians, says, "Is this prayer then foolish, since we would ask that of Him, which we know He will not give, and which without His giving, it is in the power of man to have?"[1] If we are to pray for

[1] *De Don. Persev.* n. 3.

final perseverance, then God will give us final perseverance in answer to our prayers; and if we must pray for it, then evidently we cannot obtain it through our own works. The Apostle, St. Paul, teaches that it is a gift of God "to believe in Him but also to suffer for Him."[1] Speaking of this sentence of St. Paul, St. Augustine says, that the first, namely to believe in God, belongs to the beginning of salvation, and that the second, to suffer for His sake, belongs to its perfection, and that both are free gifts of God. To obtain the gift of final perseverance, we must, however, pray rightly; that is, we must pray in the state of grace; we must pray piously and perseveringly. We should not suppose that we can obtain so great a gift by reciting one or two short prayers; we must continue to pray and never cease.

When we consider that our salvation depends on the grace of final perseverance, we can easily understand that this is a

[1] Philip. I. 29.

most precious gift of God. The Council of Trent speaks of final perseverance as "a great gift," and indeed rightly so, for is it not the perfection of all the gifts of God? We know what a great gift actual and sanctifying grace is; and yet the grace of perseverance is greater, for it includes both sanctifying grace and a multitude of actual graces. Final perseverance includes the state of sanctifying grace together with the helps to avoid sin and to die a happy death. "He that shall persevere to the end shall be saved." Is it not a great mercy of God so to arrange our death that it find us in the state of His friendship? The holy Council of Trent tells us to pray and work that we obtain this great gift of God, "Let him who thinks to stand take heed lest he fall, and let him work his salvation with fear and trembling, by labors, by vigils, by alms, by prayers and oblations, by fasting and by chastity."[1] As long as we live we cannot be certain whether we

[1] Con. Trid. Sess. 6. c. 13.

shall persevere to the end or not; hence, we should pray and fear. We should fear and tremble, not lest God forsake us, but lest we forget and forsake God. The Council enumerates the various good works we should perform, not as though we could earn the gift of final perseverance by them, but that God be moved by them to have mercy on us, and bestow this great gift upon us.

Although final perseverance is a special gift of God which cannot be merited by us, *nevertheless no one will be deprived of it except through his own fault.* We know that God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.[1] God does not forget us any more than that "a woman can forget her infant."[2] He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.[3] He stands "at the gate and knocks,"[4] crying, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."[5] He has the gift of perseverance

[1] Ezech. 18. 23. [2] Is. 49. 15. [3] Tim. 2. 4. [4] Apoc. 3. 20. [5] Matt. 11. 28.

prepared for all, but they that reject Him by sin, will not receive it. They say to God, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."[1] They are "rebellious to the light."[2] The light has come to enlighten them and lead them to heaven, but they "Loved darkness rather than the light."[3]

CONCLUSION

In the beginning God created man in the state of grace; man enjoyed the friendship of God and was surrounded by supernatural helps; he was to live a short time upon earth to prove his faithfulness to God, and was then to be taken into heaven to be eternally happy with God. This was the end God appointed for us. Our first parents, however, transgressed the commandment which God had given them, and fell into sin. By this they lost the grace of God; instead of being His friends, as they had been, they now became His enemies. With grace they lost at the same time the other supernatural gifts

[1] Job 21. 14. [2] *Ibid.* 24. 13. [3] John 3. 19.

they had received; even their natural powers were weakened. By original sin man's intellect was darkened, and a great inclination to sin was left in his will. This sin of Adam and its consequences we, his children, have inherited. We are born subject to sin, enemies of God, incapable of ourselves to do anything to reach heaven. Our lot would have been hopeless had not God in His mercy sent us a Redeemer to satisfy for the sin of Adam and for our sins. Christ came. He was God and man; as man He could suffer, and as God He could make ample satisfaction for sin. These two truths we must ever have in mind when studying the teaching of our holy Church on grace, namely, the helplessness of man on account of original sin, and the Redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christ not only made satisfaction to God for sin, but He also obtained grace for us. By grace we who by nature were servants of God and by sin enemies, become His sons. We are raised to a supernatural life; all our actions performed

according to the promptings of grace, become meritorious for heaven; Jesus, the true Son of God, becomes our brother. Through the merits of Jesus Christ we receive a superabundance of grace; we receive sanctifying grace which makes our souls beautiful and pleasing in the sight of God; we receive actual grace which prepares us for the reception of sanctifying grace and helps us perform good works, meritorious for heaven when we are in the state of grace.

Grace is the foundation of the supernatural life. Man may lead three kinds of life; he may lead a life of the senses, seeking only the pleasures of this world, resembling the animals. There is in our bodies the law of the flesh, impelling us to seek those things which please the senses, such as wealth and sensual pleasures. To follow this inclination and to forget everything that is higher, is to forget the dignity of man, and to become like the brute animals; such a one destroys in himself the image of God impressed on the soul. Above the life of the senses is the

life of the intellect. One who lives this life forgets the kingdom of heaven and seeks only the improvement of his mind by knowledge. Such a one loves literature and art, he tries to live respectably before his neighbors. Such a one is living entirely for this world and not for heaven; he will receive his reward also in this world in the praise and admiration of his fellow-men. He can expect no reward from God because he has not lived for Him; of him it will be said, "Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward."[1] Higher than this is the life of grace; it is a supernatural life. It is the life of a man who does not seek the pleasures of the senses, nor is satisfied with the higher goods of the world, but seeks the highest good, God Himself. Its foundation is divine grace; its faculties, the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity; its end, the glory of God. This is the life the Christian should lead, for he is not a mere man; he has been made a son of God and a brother of Jesus Christ. His

[1] Matt. 6. 2.

life must be in conformity with his dignity; it must be heavenly, because heaven is his true home; it must be holy, because God, his Father, is holy; it must be divine, because by grace he has become a "partaker of the divine nature."

We are sons of God by grace, not by nature; we are adopted sons of God. As sons of God we must also lead the life of sons of God, *i.e.* a life higher than our natural life. What this consists in we can learn from Him who is the Son of God by nature, Jesus Christ. Jesus, the only-begotten Son of the Father, has come, not only to redeem us from sin and obtain grace for us, but also to give us an example. For this reason He wished to remain for thirty-three years upon earth; had He come only to redeem us, it would not have been necessary for Him to live amongst us so long, a much shorter time would have been sufficient. He wanted to make us sons of His Father, and at the same time teach us how we are to live in conformity with this great dignity. If a

peasant boy were to be adopted by a king, he would not know how to act in his new surroundings; he would have to learn from those that are accustomed to court life. So it is with us; we must learn the manner of living, which is proper for us in our new capacity of sons of God, from Jesus who came from heaven to teach us this. He is our Pattern, our Teacher and Guide. We must assimilate His spirit; we must imitate His virtues; we must learn from Him what is pleasing to His heavenly Father. Like Jesus we must learn to do all things for the glory of God; like Him we must in all things seek to do the will of our heavenly Father; like Him we must pray without ceasing; like Him we must forgive our enemies; like Him we must love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. All that we do must be done out of a motive that springs from faith. If we do this, then we live from faith; and if we persevere in this manner of life, we shall be saved.

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